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# The Reading Teacher

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Reading As Thinking

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# The Reading Teacher

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Dorothy Kendall Bracken has been Director of the Reading Clinic at Southern Methodist University since its establishment in 1947. She teaches courses in the teaching of reading, diagnosis and remediation, and children's literature. She has been a visiting lecturer at the University of Chicago and Teachers College, Columbia University, and she has been actively concerned with many reading conferences. She is a member of the Language Arts Commission of the Texas Education Agency, and author or co-author of a number of books, among them four children's books and a language series, grades three through six. In the

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Author of more than eighty publications, Dr. Whipple is now working with a Detroit committee to study the reading needs of culturally different children. Several exploratory studies have been undertaken at first-grade level. They are concerned with the language equipment of culturally different children, samplings of their out-of-school interests, and trade books on the market that promise special appeal to such children. Also, classroom experiments are being planned for the near future, with a view to developing adequate methods for overcoming the language handicaps.

## A New Enterprise

**S**EVEN YEARS AGO the International Reading Association was established. It represented a getting together of a number of organizations to form one strong association.

At the same time the IRA adopted as its periodical, *THE READING TEACHER*. The purpose of this periodical was, as stated in the by-laws of the association, to provide adequate guidance in all situations in which reading serves as a vital aid to learning. Albert J. Harris, President of the Organization in 1957, put it this way: "We regard *THE READING TEACHER* as the most important single activity of the International Reading Association."

It was also the decision of the first Board of Directors to have each issue of the journal develop a theme. This approach gave some surety that a timely issue or topic would be developed at some length and with a good degree of thoroughness.

For five years the magazine was published quarterly. In 1960 the Board of Directors approved a proposal made by the Editor through the Publication Committee to add a fifth issue annually. This issue was to be an unthemed issue to provide more space for the many unsolicited papers being submitted.

Last spring the Board of Directors decided to publish a sixth issue annually. This issue was to be compiled

by selecting key articles that had already appeared in *THE READING TEACHER* and were thought to merit republishing.

Accordingly the Editor compiled a list of all the articles that had appeared to date in our periodical. Then he asked Gertrude Whipple, Elementary Supervisor of Language Education of the Detroit Public Schools and currently a member of the Board of Directors, to study the list. She was to select a theme she felt timely and select articles accordingly, which she did, and this new issue of "Reading as Thinking" is the result. Unfortunately not all the articles she selected could be published in this issue. Even so it is the opinion of the Editor that she chose wisely and that the articles that appear here are representative. It is our hope that you, the readers of this periodical, will agree.

Since 1957 the number of copies printed per issue has doubled. Twenty-four thousand copies of the September 1961 issue were printed. Astonishingly enough, the reserve supply of some issues has been completely exhausted. This is sufficient testimony, is it not, of the regard people have for our journal. It does imply to a good degree that *THE READING TEACHER* is discerningly accurate, well rendered, and is meeting the needs and expectations of reading teachers everywhere.—R. G. S.

## Secondary School Reading as Thinking

by RUTH STRANG  
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**B**ROADLY DEFINED, reading involves physical factors, thinking, and feeling. Thinking is implicit in every aspect of reading. To recognize words one must perceive likenesses and differences, and must be aware of the relations between letter sounds and printed symbols. Understanding of word meaning depends on giving proper weight to each part of the word, as E. L. Thorndike pointed out in 1917 in his article, "Reading As Reasoning." For example, giving undue weight to the first two syllables of the word *majority* led one youngster to define it as "the greatest general of them all." Similarly, in order to comprehend accurately the literal meaning of a passage, one must see relationships and give proper weight to each word, phrase, and sentence.

It is important not only to find out what an author says, but also to think about why he says it. Thinking is involved in arriving at generalizations, drawing conclusions, and making inferences and applications. As the reader recognizes that a given concept is similar to ones he has encountered previously, he may arrive at a generalization. When related ideas are evaluated, a conclusion may emerge. When they are used as a basis for speculation, inferences may be formulated. When the reader relates certain concepts to his life experiences, he may apply them to

his own uses. In every instance thinking brings order to the material read, or creates new patterns out of it.

All these aspects of reading involve some feeling tone. The reader may feel satisfaction in being mentally alert and in accomplishing his purpose. He may feel pleasure or displeasure, satisfaction or annoyance with the content or the style. He may approve or disapprove of the author's ideas. Sometimes he will find his emotions aroused by some incident or character that the author describes. These feelings may either facilitate or hinder the thinking process.

Both thinking and feeling are involved in an individual's personal development through reading. For example, in discussing a detective story, *Buttons*, the teacher asked, "What clues do you find to the mother's character?" Students pointed out details indicating that she was reluctant to let her son grow up, that she jumped to conclusions, that she was a quick thinker, that she was jealous of his girl friend. The teacher followed up the first point by asking, "If the mother is overprotective, how might that affect Ernie?" And one student replied, "Children don't appreciate it when the mother does all the thinking for them."

In high schools today we find that students represent a wide range of reading ability—from nonreaders to

some who read as well as superior adults. Contrary to general opinion, thinking is involved in teaching all kinds of students to read.

### Word Recognition as Thinking

That thinking is required in phonic analysis is illustrated by the experience of a group of nonreading pupils of high school age. In reading their own stories these pupils were having difficulty with certain small words.\*

Teacher: Which of these words begin with *w*?

Pupils: *Went, what, when.*

Teacher: Which one of these words begins with a sound different from the two others?

Pupil: *Went.*

Teacher: Think of three words that begin with the same sound as *went*.

Pupils: *Water, wash, wish.*

The teacher wrote these words on cards and asked the pupils to analyze the way each one is built, while they listened carefully to its sound. A similar study was made of *what*, *when*, and *they*. After the pupils had practiced these words and had reread fluently the story in which they had initially encountered difficulty with them, the teacher again called their attention to the purpose of this practice in phonic analysis by saying, "You see, it's important to know the little words that cause many people trouble in reading."

Reasoning is also involved in teaching other word recognition

skills, as in the following lesson with able learners:

Teacher: You have just begun to write books about yourselves. What do we call books people write about themselves?

Pupil: *Autobiography.* (Teacher writes it on the board.)

Teacher: This is an interesting word. With what smaller word does it start?

Pupil: *Auto.*

Teacher: What other words start the same way?

Pupil: *Automatic.*

Pupil: *Automobile.*

Pupil: *Autograph.*

Teacher: What do you think the first part of the word means?

Pupil: *Self.*

Teacher writes *automaton* on the board to challenge their newly acquired learning: Can you think what this word means?

Pupil: *Self-starting.*

Pupil: It goes by itself.

Teacher: If you know the "key" to a word, it helps you get the meaning. You recognize the same part of a word in a number of different combinations.

That every step in unlocking the meaning of unfamiliar words requires thinking is illustrated by the following teaching experience. The teacher mentioned the problem, common to good as well as to poor readers, of discovering the meaning of words one does not know. He presented the sentence: He is an *iconoclast*.

Teacher: What word would you have difficulty with?

Pupil: The fourth.

\*For some of these illustrations the author is indebted to Mr. John McInnes' demonstrations in the summer High School and College Reading Center, Teachers College, Columbia University.

Teacher: Is there any clue in the sentence as to its meaning?

Pupil: *He*.

Teacher: What does that tell us?

Pupil: That it is a person.

Teacher: If we added a few words to the sentence we would have better clues: *He was an iconoclast who undermined the boy's belief*. What are the key words here?

Pupil: *Undermined* and *belief*.

Teacher: What does *undermined* tell you?

Pupil: That he took away the boy's foundation or faith.

Teacher: What kind of belief might it be?

Pupil: Belief in God.

Teacher: Are there any clues in the word itself that make you think it's belief in God?

Pupil: My uncle brought an icon from Russia, and it's an image of Christ.

Teacher: Do you know any other word that has *clast* in it? (No answers.)

Teacher: *Idoloclast* is quite similar to *iconoclast*, but is not as commonly used. Let's try the dictionary. What does it say about these two words? What does the last part, *clast*, mean? What does the whole word mean? Give us some sentences using *iconoclast*. Who are the iconoclasts today?

In answering these questions the students related *clast* to the Greek *klao*, *break*. They discussed the more specific meaning of *idoloclast*, and noted how the meaning of *iconoclast* had been extended from the breaking of an image to include the destruction of almost any faith or belief. They referred to "the angry young

men" as iconoclasts of today.

Each of the word recognition skills—context clues (4), structural analysis, phonic analysis, and even the use of the dictionary—requires seeing relationships and making judgments as to the relevance of similar forms or meanings to the word in question.

### Skills in Locating Information

In exploring a book of short stories with a group of seriously retarded teen-age pupils, the teacher encouraged thinking by saying: "Let's look at the index. What kind of stories are there in this book? What kind of stories do you like best?"

Pupil: Adventure stories.

Teacher: What are adventure stories?

Pupil: Something exciting happens.

Teacher: Are there adventure stories in this book? Look through the book and judging by the titles and pictures find an adventure story. Then tell us why you think it is an adventure story. You can pick out the one you'd like to read first.

This exercise gave these youngsters practice in setting up and applying a criterion for the selection of interesting reading material.

Locating sources of information on a given topic may require an amazing amount of thinking.

It is easy enough to say glibly, "Select the material relevant to your topic," but many students need specific instructions in how to do this. For these students it is helpful, as McCullough pointed out (7), to go over a passage, sentence by sentence,



asking such questions as, "Has this anything to do with.....? What has it to do with it? What shall we put down as part of our answer to this question?"

Second, there are many questions concerning the authenticity and reliability of the source. Is the publication date recent enough so that the material may include new developments on the topic? Is the author's purpose to give full and impartial information or to support a preconceived conclusion? Is he an authority on the subject? Does he distinguish between fact, reasonable opinion, and unsupported conjecture? Can his statements be verified? On what basis were the judgments made? Does the author have some special bias? Does he make exaggerated claims?

Differences between opinion and fact can be brought out by having a class give their snap judgment on a current news item, and then collect, organize, and relate facts that have a bearing on the item. A second opinion poll will show how the added information has changed the first impression. This experience shows the class that there is a great difference in the quality of opinions, depending upon the nature and amount of the evidence that supports the opinions.

Certain common errors may be found in source material: generalizations that go beyond the facts, reliance on a single authority rather than a representative range of authorities, and explanation of results by reference to a single cause

rather than by reference to all possible causes.

Third, critical thinking is constantly necessary in the process of extracting content that is related to the topic and the reader's purpose.

Advertisements provide excellent material for practice in critical thinking. Television commercials can be presented in class and critically analyzed: What "persuasive" or "color" words are used to give certain impressions? What attention-getting devices are used? What things or ideas are associated with the product to enhance its appeal? What claims are made but not substantiated? Pupils may do experiments to test the accuracy of some of the statements. From this analysis of relatively obvious propaganda, the students may go on to the more subtle "slanting" that occurs in newspaper headlines and editorials. They may also consider the viewpoints implicit or expressed in history books, and eventually analyze the effectiveness and appropriateness of the figures of speech used in poetry.

### Skimming Skills

In skimming one must think about the purpose for which the skimming is done: to find a specific date or fact, to survey the organization of a chapter or article, to note the main ideas, to get a general impression of the topic. The first kind of skimming requires little thinking; it is somewhat like looking for a four-leafed clover. In the other types of skimming one must select relevant ideas and relate them in the desired form

or pattern. This process often requires more concentration than would be necessary in a slower, more careful reading of the same material.

### **Outlining and Summarizing**

Outlining and summarizing are exercises in thinking. Questions help to direct the pupil's attention to meaning. If the teacher finds gaps in the pupil's outline, he may take the opportunity to offer instruction in methods for identifying important ideas. As preliminary practice the students may be asked to arrange separate sentences or paragraphs in logical order; this will show his ability to grasp the relations between ideas.

### **Paragraph Comprehension**

Paragraph reading can be an exercise in logical reasoning. The main idea of the paragraph is its premise or conclusion. The reader examines the evidence given in support of the premise or conclusion. To do this he must follow the organization of the passage as he reads. Once he has exposed the framework, he must determine whether the argument is valid by appraising each bit of evidence and each opinion. When he has a clear idea of what the author has said, the reader is able to distinguish between the author's ideas and those which the passage has evoked in his mind. Consider the following:

1. "The United States today faces a serious challenge to its basic, fundamental concept. If any nation, even when there is need for caution, in a period of anxiety, displays irrational

fear and loss of nerve, and ignores the denial of human rights and the sublimation of national principles, that nation is losing its moral courage. In our time, we place censorship over the free play of intelligence upon issues, we foster the urge and tendency to turn the spirit of free inquiry into indoctrination and restraint of criticism, and we tolerate without protest sweeping attacks upon education. A crisis is upon us."

The main idea of this paragraph is expressed in both the first and the last sentence; it is a conclusion that is reached by deductive thinking. The major premise of the argument is included in the second sentence and can be stated thus: "All nations which exhibit fear and restrain liberty are nations which are losing moral courage." The minor premise, found in the third sentence, is that "the United States is a nation which exhibits fear and restrains liberty." This minor premise is supported by induction: the author lists three things which, in his opinion, show that we are exhibiting fear and restraining liberty. The conclusion can now be restated: "The United States is losing moral courage."

The organization of the paragraph is now clear. What are its implications? Does "facing a serious challenge to its basic concept" mean the same thing as "losing moral courage"? The author implies that it does. If it does not, the syllogism is not valid and the conclusion is not true. The author presents acceptable evidence of fear and restraint of liberty, but what about his assump-

tion that a nation which displays fear and restrains liberty is losing moral courage? This is questionable. The author does not, in this paragraph, propose a solution or call for action. If the reader takes this additional step, he should be aware that this is his thought, and not the author's.

2. "Loyalty, whether to country or other individuals or to ideals, is a personal thing. Most truly loyal Americans are quite rightfully offended when their loyalty is not taken for granted. The person who should be suspect is not the reluctant oath-giver but the one who all too readily and glibly proclaims to everyone within earshot that he is impeccably loyal. The faithless husband is the one most likely to protest too much about his fidelity to his wife. But the faithful husband, badgered by a nagging wife, is more likely to affirm his loyalty only with the sort of distaste that breeds contempt."\*

Here the main idea is expressed in the third sentence: "The person who should be suspect is the one who all too readily and glibly proclaims his loyalty." The author seeks to support his argument by drawing an analogy between faithfulness to one's country and fidelity to one's wife. He makes the generalization that all loyalties have one factor in common—they

\*These illustrations of the application of formal logic to the analysis of prose arguments were given in an unpublished paper written by Captain Philo A. Hutcheson in the author's course in the improvement of reading in high school and college at Teachers College, Columbia University. Captain Hutcheson has shown how the teaching of logic may help to improve the higher-level reading skills that are so important in our life today.

are personal, but he does not mention their differences. His implication that the unfaithful husband and the disloyal American will behave in the same way does not stand up under critical appraisal; therefore the argument must be rejected.

### Comprehension of the Whole

Different patterns of thinking are required for different school subjects. In the social studies one must follow sequences of events and discern cause and effect relations. This kind of thinking may be stimulated by such questions as these: "How has the geography of the country influenced the character of its people?" "How have events in the history of the country affected conditions there today?" Scientific materials, as Russell (8) pointed out, "are often organized around some principle or law . . . in health [the writer] is usually making applications of known facts."

To encourage students to think while reading a story, such questions as these are helpful: "Why did this boy want a car?" "Read the part that tells what kind of a person he was. Do you think he knew much about cars? What evidence do you have of this?" "What has happened in the story up to this point?" (This question involves telling the events in the story in logical sequence.) "What do you think happened next?"

Reading an article demands reasoning from start to finish. The source of the article—editorial page, news page, advertisement, textbook, or popular magazine—gives the reader an initial clue to the purpose for



which it was written. By examining the title he may get further clues as to what to expect. From the first paragraph he sometimes gets information about "who," "where," "when," and "how many." In the succeeding paragraphs the reader may find elaboration or support of the ideas introduced in the first paragraph. In a final paragraph he is likely to find the author's conclusions, which he should compare with his own conclusions as he forms them.

### Conditions Favorable to Thoughtful Reading

Reading is most likely to be a thinking process under the following conditions:

1. When there is a problem to be solved, a story to be interpreted, a question to be answered; under these conditions the reader has a mind-set to read in a thoughtful, purposeful way.

2. When the reader has time to review what he already knows about the problem and to think while he is reading.

3. When the reader receives instruction and practice in the techniques of reading critically and determining the precise meanings of words.

4. When pupils have a chance to discuss what they read; group discussion alerts them to the need for critical reading and rewards their efforts to read thoughtfully.

5. When pupils are encouraged to relate their experience to their reading.

6. When pupils have not been

lulled to passivity by the effortless entertainment provided by television, radio, and other mass media where the thinking, such as it is, has all been done by the producer.

7. When examination questions can be answered only by thoughtful reading.

Each reading task requires a different kind of thinking, depending on the material and the reader's purpose. Life is too short to make a detailed, logical analysis of every paragraph. Overemphasis on critical interpretation may make some meticulous pupils overmeticulous.

On the other hand, thinking makes reading exciting, and opens doors into the adventurous unknown. It enhances the delight and satisfaction that one may obtain from books.

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## The Good Reader Thinks Critically

by NILA BANTON SMITH  
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PUT THIS question to any group of people — teachers or laymen, "What are the basic skills in reading?" "Comprehension" will come back to you with reverberatory frequency. This big blanket term of "comprehension" is used generally and glibly to connote a so-called fundamental reading skill. Yet, may we be so bold as to ask, "Is comprehension a reading skill?" Is this many-sided, complex act a skill in the sense that a certain stroke in tennis is a skill; and as such, subject to development largely through exercises based on reading? Or is comprehension, in its broader sense, a welter of processes, abilities, attitudes and purposes which one brings to bear upon any situation in which he wishes to derive meanings from language symbols, whether spoken or written? If the answer to this latter question is in the affirmative, may we ask if comprehension in reading is subject in its development to all of those factors which affect growth in the ability to work with language meanings, rather than something definite and specific and different to be taught solely in connection with reading? And might it help to clarify things if we talk about "meanings in reading" instead of using the equivocal and ambiguous term of "comprehension" as designating a special reading skill? "Meanings" is

the term which will be given preference throughout the remainder of this discussion.

What are the prerequisites to high-level understanding of language meanings? First, one must have a wealth of concepts to draw upon in bringing meanings to the language symbols. Second, one must have the inclination, habit and ability to use his higher thinking processes, and to adapt them to different contents and purposes; and third, which probably should have been first, one needs to have facility in language expression, and to possess an extensive meaningful vocabulary. These are the fundamentals which form the matrix out of which understandings grow, be it in reading, oral expression, graphs, charts or pictures. Possibly then, the best way to develop "comprehension" is to direct a major amount of attention toward building the groundwork rather than depending so largely upon furbishing the cupola.

### Concepts and Meanings

Let's first consider the role that concepts have to play in developing ability to get meanings from reading.

In order to understand printed symbols, the child must bring to the page a wealth of vivid concepts. How are these concepts derived? Experience is the source out of which con-

cepts emerge. A concept is the residue which is left with us as a result of experience; it is the condensation of experience which takes definite form in our mind. Insofar as reading is concerned, then, concepts are crystallized experience which we draw upon in filling empty shells of word symbols with kernels of meaning.

Studies have repeatedly shown the effect of concept-building upon reading success.

*Trips and Excursions.* Cantor (1) conducted a very interesting study to ascertain the value of excursions to kindergarten children as a means of preparing them for first-grade reading. During the course of her investigation she used four methods of checking: (1) a critical summary of excursions taken according to previously established criteria; (2) an analysis of the concept-building characteristics of the excursions with relation to a standard vocabulary; (3) a comparison of the topical and vocabulary demands of primary readers with kindergarten preparation; (4) a check during the first year of primary work done by children who had had this excursion experience in their kindergarten year.

This investigator found that two hundred and four concepts were given background in experience through nine excursions taken, and that a correlation had been effected between the vocabulary and concept demands of primary reading, and the vocabulary and concept supply of nine typical kindergarten excursions. The children who had taken these excursions in kindergarten were also

checked for reading readiness and reading achievement in first grade. Cantor's conclusion in regard to the effect of the excursions on learning to read are: "From results of scientific tests administered in the primary year and the comparisons made with reading readiness in other schools, it seems probable that the children (who had the excursions) definitely profited from the comprehensive program of kindergarten excursions experienced in their kindergarten year."

At a higher level, Ledbetter (2) found in his investigation with eleventh-grade pupils that, "meanings or concepts present more difficulties to the average student than vocabulary, sentence length, or sentence structure."

One of the most basic functions of a teacher of reading is that of insuring experiences out of which concepts will grow, and then guiding these experiences to fruition in concept development. To some, such a statement may seem trite, indeed. Yet, up to this time, we have barely tapped the possibilities of utilizing experiential background in developing concepts as a foundation for meaningful reading.

*First-Hand Experiences.* While it is desirable that more emphasis be placed upon large, planned first-hand experiences in general, it is urgent that more experiential teaching be done "on the spot" as needs arise in reading and other areas. As an example, let us consider the case of the teacher who, upon a certain occasion, placed this sentence on the bulletin board: "This is a chilly morning." Her pupils, who came from Mexican

homes, gathered around the bulletin board and tried to read the message. The teacher helped them with the pronunciation of the new word *chilly*. Then she asked what the sentence meant. All of them thought that the sentence told them in effect that this was a morning on which they should eat food seasoned with chili peppers. The teacher then explained that *chilly* when spelled as it was in this sentence and when used to describe a morning meant cold. She took them to the door and momentarily let them experience the sensation of feeling the cool, crisp air as it rushed against their bare faces and through their clothing. Undoubtedly, after this experience, these children sensed the full and correct meaning of the symbol for *chilly* whenever they encountered it in a phrase pertaining to temperature.

As teachers become increasingly sensitive to the part which experience plays in establishing meaningful concepts to use in filling in word symbols, they will more frequently take the time and trouble to provide experiences which will equip children to bring to new word symbols, clear and accurate understandings of meanings. This is one way "to develop comprehension."

**Visual Aids.** First-hand experiences are not always practical but visual aids of one kind or another are nearly always available and these serve well in concept-building. Tom, a sixth-grade boy, was reading about the school days of a Greek scholar. The story plot hinged upon a lost stylus. Tom was asked if he knew what a

stylus was. "Yes," he replied, "a man that cuts women's hair." In this case Tom brought his own experience to the printed symbol, but it didn't work, so he was given another experience through the use of a visual aid. He was shown the picture of a stylus and its use was explained. This took so much time that Tom couldn't go on reading the story that day but he read it the next day and as he did so satisfying meanings leapt forth from printed pages which might otherwise have imparted only perplexing confusions.

In the rush of things, we often think we haven't time to engage in many first-hand experiences or to bother with the use of visual aids, explanation and discussion. Possibly building useful concepts which will serve the child in his reading throughout life is more important than covering a few more pages "in the book."

### Thinking and Meanings

What do we do with meanings that we derive from listening to a lecture, a conversation, a radio or television broadcast? If we're not accustomed to doing much thinking for ourselves, we accept what is said and perhaps recall it and quote it to others. If we are keen and alert and make the fullest use of our mental capacities, we do many other things with these meanings: we question, reason, compare, draw inferences, generalize, interject original ideas, seek interaction of these ideas with others and draw independent conclusions.

Recent investigators who have attempted to analyze the different as-

pects of the reading act include the use of mental processes as basic factors. Johnson (3) concluded that these abilities are of prime importance: "(a) seeing relationships between words and ideas; (b) evaluating an author's statements; (c) drawing inferences; (d) developing a problem and adjusting the type of reading to fulfill the purpose."

Artley (4) in his study to determine specific abilities which contribute most in comprehension of the social studies, named these as three of the most important: "the ability to interpret; to obtain facts; to organize."

Young (5) phrased one of the conclusions to his study in a most convincing way when he said, "The chief element in reading is *thinking*, not motor or mechanical processes of eye movements, eye-span, vocalization, and the like."

### Thought Questions vs. Memory Questions

It is regrettable that the most frequent experience which children are ordinarily given in working with meanings in reading is one in which not much thinking is done. It is the type in which the children simply are asked to give back some statement or word in the text. "What was Mary playing with?" And the text says, "Mary was playing with her dolls." "What was Tommy doing?" And the sentence that had just been read said, quite definitely, "Tommy was playing with his fire truck."

It is easy to ask such questions. Questions of such type do not re-

quire much mental activity on the part of the one who asks them and little or no thinking on the part of pupils. Such questions undoubtedly give practice in recalling and reproducing statements or facts given in the text. This does have a place in detailed factual reading in which the reader wishes to memorize exact minutiae. It is questionable, however, if such exercises really aid children in gleaning the types of meanings they will need in using reading to enrich their lives in the fuller sense.

Through continued practice, however, children often become so glib in answering this reproduction type of question that they convey the impression of having achieved a high degree of excellency in "comprehension." A thirteen-year-old boy was recently sent to the writer for diagnosis. He had above-average intelligence and was considered to be "a very good reader," but was failing in his other studies. As a part of the diagnosis, the boy was asked to read the story of Johnny Appleseed. A class of graduate students observed and also read the story. When the boy had finished, he was asked several questions which could be answered by re-stating what had been said directly in the text, as indicated below:

How long ago did Johnny Appleseed live?

"More than a hundred years ago."

What was his real name?

"Jonathan Chapman."

How did he spend his time?

"Planting apple trees."

These and additional questions of the reproduction type were asked and



Larry answered every one of them unerringly in the words of the book.

"Do you think Larry needs help in 'comprehension?'" the graduate class was asked. "No," came the unanimous response. "His 'comprehension' is perfect!"

Then came some questions which required Larry to do some *thinking*, questions which necessitated *doing* something with meanings gleaned from the story, doing things that called for the use of several mental processes.

"Why did Johnny choose a spot deep in the wilderness where the settlers had not yet come to plant his trees?"

"He wanted to be alone while he was working," was the answer.

Larry had missed a very important implication in drawing his conclusion as to why Johnny went into the wilderness ahead of the settlers to plant the trees. His real reason for planting the trees before the settlers arrived was, of course, so that the trees would grow and bear fruit by the time the settlers moved in. Larry's reason made Johnny an unsocial sort of person who didn't want anyone around him while he was working.

Several other questions of the thinking type were asked. Larry's replies to all of them were equally faulty. And Larry is only one of hundreds of *intelligent* pupils who learn the superficial knack of giving back what the text says, and never tap the significance of meanings which can be gleaned only through the use of mental processes of a higher type than are required in merely reciting statements

that are given in the book.

*Discussion Questions.* One of the most productive ways of developing ability to get meanings in reading is through discussion in which the teacher takes part and makes her special contribution by throwing in a question or a statement here and there which stimulates cause and effect reasoning, points up the necessity for making comparisons, drawing inferences, arriving at conclusions, gathering generalizations.

As an example of such a discussion, one might describe a situation recently observed in a third-grade classroom. The children had read a story about Fred, a boy who visited his Uncle Bill. The uncle was a sheep-rancher and lived in a covered wagon in the foothills. During the first few days of his visit, Fred was concerned about his uncle's shepherd dogs, who stayed out in the stormy weather with the sheep night and day. So one night Uncle Bill took Fred out while a storm was raging. He called the dogs. They appeared from the midst of the herd of sheep, but they "did not want to leave their wooly hiding place." Fred said, "All right. I won't worry about them any more."

Children and teacher discussed the story as they went along and also after it was finished. Everyone entered into the plot with interest and enthusiasm and relived the experiences of the characters. As all of this was taking place, however, the teacher kept uppermost in her mind the significance of stimulating children's *thinking* in working with meanings derived from their reading. Now and then at

appropriate times she asked questions to which there were no answers directly in the text—questions which called for inferences, generalizations, comparisons, reasoning. A few examples will be given:

"In what part of the country do you think this story took place?" The children referred to details in the text and pictures and soon arrived at the conclusion that the setting of the story was in the Rocky Mountain region.

"Why do you suppose one of the dogs was called Taffy?"

None of these children had had the experience of seeing warm taffy pulled and noting its golden-brown color when in this elastic state. The colors which they associated with taffy were greens, blues, pinks and yellows which they found in the bits of confection contained in the salt-water taffy boxes that their parents had brought from Atlantic City. Lacking the experience necessary for this concept, the teacher told them about taffy in its natural state and compared its color to Tom's sweater and Jane's hair. The children then easily reasoned why one of the dogs was called "Taffy."

"Compare the way that Fred felt at the beginning and end of the story. Why did he change?"

At no point in the story does the text tell how Fred felt, nor is there any statement in regard to why he changed. The children, however, were able to find tell-tale phrases and words here and there that indicated how worried Fred was all through the early part of the story, and others which revealed his satisfaction and

peace of mind toward the end of the story. Just one major generalization on their part disclosed the cause of this change.

And thus it is that a wise teacher can cultivate thinking in connection with children's reading dozens of times every day. And thus it is that meanings take form and that the significance of printed symbols becomes fully apparent.

*Evaluating and Judging.* Critical reading is another aspect of the reading-for-meanings area of development. Critical reading calls for additional steps in thinking. It involves getting the facts and interpreting deeper meanings as discussed above. It also makes use of the personal judgment of the reader in deciding upon validity of the material. In critical reading the reader evaluates and passes judgment upon the purpose, the fair-mindedness, the bias, the truthfulness of statements made in the text.

Jean was reading a story in a pre-primer about children who made a playhouse by spreading newspapers across the backs of two chairs. Among other things, the story said that Puff, the cat, played with them too. He ran about on top of the playhouse. Jean stopped in her reading and remarked, "Puff couldn't have run on top of this playhouse, because it was made of newspapers." Jean was doing critical reading.

Tommy, a second-grader, read these statements in some arithmetic material that he was given. "Nancy went to the store to get some milk. Milk was 12 cents a quart. She got

two quarts. How much did she pay for it?"

"There's something wrong here," said Tommy. "Milk costs lots more than 12 cents. I paid 21 cents for a quart at our store yesterday." Tommy also was doing critical reading.

In this age of high-pressure salesmanship, through the use of printed material, much more emphasis should be placed on critical reading. It is of no small consequence these days that youth should be taught to look for slants and biases and tricks of the propagandists so that they may be in a position to judge the validity of statements which they read in all printed material.

Primary teachers should recognize and commend critical evaluations such as those expressed by Jean and Tommy and encourage others "to think about what they read and try to decide if it could be true." Such suggestions, of course, should be made in connection with realistic or factual material. It will do no harm, however, even when reading the old fairy tales if a child or teacher interjects occasionally, "of course, this couldn't really have happened, but it's fun to pretend that it did."

While we need to rely largely upon class discussion and skillful questions to develop critical reading in the primary grades, more direct work can be done in the upper grades. Some suggestions are given below.

Have the children bring in newspapers from different publishers, compare reports of writers on the same event and note variations. Have them pass judgment on the reputation of

the newspaper for "uncolored reports" or the reputation of the news writer for presenting accurate facts. Have them pick out statements that are opinions and statements that are facts.

Ask them to bring in articles from the various columnists and discuss each one in terms of personal opinion versus facts, bias, radical ideas and attempts at sensationalism. The same procedure can be used with magazine articles, pamphlets and books.

In addition to experiences in evaluating as indicated above, students should become acquainted with methods and tricks used by the propagandists. Each member of the group may bring in a clipping of an advertisement, an excerpt from a speech made during a political campaign, an article on any topic in which the writer is trying to influence readers in their thinking or actions.

Let each one read his selection aloud. Following the reading, encourage free discussion concerning the writer's motive and the techniques that he is using to accomplish it.

These are only a few suggestions for developing critical reading which again, in essence, is critical thinking. Indeed, the emphasis in this entire section is on the necessity of developing children's ability to enter into mental interaction with meanings embedded in printed symbols, both those that are immediately apparent and those that lurk behind the black and white symbols. Perhaps the import of this section on meanings can best be summed up in a simple three-word definition of reading which Ed-



ward L. Thorndike stated many years ago, "Reading is thinking."

### Language and Meanings

Many books have been written on Language and Meanings. Too little has been written on the triangular relationship between language, meanings and reading. Reading is the same as any other language expression except that it is a one-sided communication, a monologue, if you will. You can't talk back and forth with it except as you interact with the symbol meanings in your thinking. But the same *language* factors which enable you to get meanings from spoken language operate in helping you to get meanings from printed language.

Several investigations have shown relationships between abilities in language and ability to get meanings in reading. Goodenough (6) found a correlation of .79 between ability to understand and explain meanings of words in a vocabulary test and reading ability.

Gates (7) found that the most important prognosis measure to use in predicting progress in beginning reading was the ability to grasp the substance of a story told to the children. Russell (8) found a correlation of .80 between reading comprehension and word meaning. Young (5) found that there is an intimate relationship between reading comprehension and hearing comprehension. Artly (4) and Davis (9) both found a knowledge of word meanings to be an extremely important factor in reading.

And so it is that we are not lacking in evidence of the significance of the

language factors in reading. In fact, growth in reading is dependent upon growth in language. Children who do well in oral and written expression, spelling and vocabulary, usually do well in reading. All of these so-called "subjects" deal with language symbols, all are part of the same constellation, each reinforces and contributes to the other. While the teacher is developing growth in any phase of language, she is also developing "comprehension" in reading.

From the standpoint of *meanings* in reading, however, a meaningful vocabulary is probably the most important of the several language factors. One of our chief concerns then is "how can a meaningful vocabulary be developed?" The answers are found in an abundance of experiences in which many and different words are inherent: through association with teachers and parents who are willing to answer questions and explain, and who, themselves, possess and use an extensive vocabulary; through ample opportunities to talk, discuss, ask and answer questions. These are the ingredients which, when mixed together and blended, result in a large stock of words to which varying significations may be attached according to the content and circumstances in which they are used.

Of course, reading contributes its share in building vocabulary also. The child brings vocabulary and meanings to the printed page, but he also derives vocabulary and meanings from reading, and this is the juncture at which the reading teacher

needs to be especially alert. She needs to make the most of reading content in developing word meanings and calling children's attention to the chameleon-like properties of words as they are fitted into their different contexts.

The multiple meaning words probably cause the most confusion in reading, particularly as their meanings become more abstract. When a child meets a word in text in its first, plain-sense meaning, it usually represents a fairly concrete idea to him, particularly if it is one which he has previously encountered experientially.

As an example, consider the word "capital." The child may have his first experience with this word while playing with his A.B.C. blocks, when someone calls his attention to "capital H" on the side of the block and "small h" on the other side. He soon learns the difference between "capital" letters and "small" letters and in this sense "capital" has a real, concrete meaning for him. A little later in his life he may take a trip to the capital of the state with his father and mother. Here he sees a building with a large round dome and many steps leading up to it, and is told that this is the capitol building where the law-making bodies sit while discussing the affairs of state. After this, when he reads that a certain city is the capital of a state, he has a fairly concrete concept of the meaning of the sentence. As he passes the local bank he reads on the window, "Capital \$600,000." Now he associates "capital" with a bank and money. In all of these cases, "capital" has been tied to

a concrete object—a letter, a city, a bank, and while the child needs some additional help in getting the complete meaning of a capital city or the capital of a bank, he usually is not puzzled and confused when he encounters these terms in print. But the real trouble begins when, as he advances in reading, he finds "capital" used in describing more generalized and abstract nouns as a "capital error;" "capital goods;" "capital punishment." The most remote level of abstraction is reached when he meets the word as part of a term which represents an idea that embraces a vast expanse of territory, that is; "capital and labor." The shift to this highly generalized use of the word "capital" is quite a long stride to take. If left alone to struggle with the interpretation of this meaning of "capital," unaided by mental interaction and clarifying discussion, the pupil may leave his reading with only a vague or partial understanding of the meanings involved; or his understanding may be definitely erroneous; or it may be highly colored by emotive language with which the word was surrounded. Yet this word, used in this sense, has much to do with the structure, thought and feeling of American society and, as such, deserves careful study and interpretation.

The teacher, of course, should be keenly aware of different levels of abstraction and ever on the alert for shifts from one level to another as children meet such words in their reading. She will invite the class as a whole to study such a word and to tell what it means to them in terms

of their individual experiences. Out of all this, they will then try to construct a common meaning.

Undoubtedly as we come more generally to understand the nature of meanings, the discussion and clarification of different levels of abstraction will be considered one of the most important responsibilities of the teacher of reading.

In concluding this article, it might be said that its objectives have been two-fold: first to stimulate fresh thinking about the old topic of "comprehension;" and second, to delineate the true fundamentals of meaningful reading—(1) concepts, (2) linguistic ability, and (3) the use of the thinking processes.

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## Personal Values in Reading

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**R**EADING IS responding. The response may be at the surface level of "calling" the word. It may be at the somewhat deeper level of understanding the explicit meaning of sentence, paragraph or passage. Sometimes reading may be at a third level. It may involve going beyond the facts to the discovery of new and personal meanings. It may be a stimulus to images, memories, identification or fresh and creative thoughts.

Teachers are concerned with each of the three levels of response. First, we want children to be accurate in what they read—to see the difference between *broad* and *board*. Second, we want them to get accurate meaning from a story or article, especially if the passage is a factual one such as is found in a science or a health textbook. But sometimes we aim to have children go beyond accuracy and literal meaning to some personal interpretation of what they read. We want them to say, "I think Ginger is a funny dog" or "It was very brave of Manuel to scare away the bull."

In other words we want children to find in a story humor or beauty or new meanings. We want them to see for themselves such qualities as courage or friendliness or loyalty.

Put another way, we as teachers need to help children discover that printed materials can be treated in

these three ways. Teachers and pupils can decide whether to read for the surface meaning or whether it is worth while to dip below the surface. This habit of diving below the surface may start to develop in the primary grades. After the primary child has been helped over some of the first hurdles of learning to read he may read widely in the many attractive and easy readers and short storybooks available today. As he begins to branch out into current materials—the newspaper, the advertisements, the magazines and a wider range of books—he must learn how to discriminate among these materials, to differentiate between the superficial and the thoughtful, the evanescent interest and the permanent value. He can learn that the comics are on the surface—to be read quickly and forgotten. He can be helped to decide that many newspaper and news magazine stories are in this same, temporary category. He can be guided in seeing that some factual materials are very useful for understanding the solar system or for building a model plane. But he can also be helped in seeing that some poems, stories and books have hidden meanings that must be explored and, if possible, understood. Although a child will not name them directly, these meanings and symbols may represent some of the important, uni-

fying ideas in our culture such as the importance of the individual or the value of co-operative effort. Now these concepts will not be stated explicitly in the story—they must be “read into” it by the reader. And usually the young reader needs help in finding such symbols and deeper meanings.

Two stories in a well-known reading series and from a well-loved poem illustrate my point. The stories have been picked from readers with deliberate intent to show that in this available source are materials which should not be skimmed over in a quick attempt to get the story read and the book closed. Instead, here are typical examples of how the teacher, with broader background and deeper understanding, may help children see symbols and find deeper meanings.

The first story is from the third reader called *Friends Far and Near*. This story is called “A Little Black Bear Goes to School.” Notice the opportunities for developing personal values in this one short third-grade story. It begins:

“Take it back!” puffed Henry, striking a blow at Sam.

“Won’t!” came the answer as the two boys rolled over and over. Legs and fists flew. The fight was on again.

“The boys did not see the stranger who stepped into the clearing just in time to watch the fight. His blue eyes were bright with fun. But when he saw the blows were coming down hard, he leaped toward the boys.

“Hold on, you young wildcats!” he called, pulling the boys apart.

‘Now, then. Speak up. What’s the matter?’

“‘Sam says Johnny Appleseed is just an old tramp,’ cried Henry, pushing the hair out of his eyes. ‘And I’m making him take it back.’

“The stranger’s eyes danced. ‘Well, maybe Johnny Appleseed is just an old tramp.’

“‘Sure he is,’ said Sam gruffly.

“‘No, sir,’ cried Henry. ‘You don’t know him if you think that. He is kind to everybody. My father says he walks a long, long way every year planting apple trees so that people can have fruit.’

“‘What started you boys talking about Johnny Appleseed?’ asked the stranger.

“‘He’s going to teach school next week. The master is sick,’ said Sam. ‘And who wants to go to school to an old tramp!’ cried Henry.

The story continues the next week at a pioneer schoolhouse. Sam and Henry get to this little log building and there is the old man who had stopped their fight. He is Johnny Appleseed. While he is telling the children about his apple trees and the wild animals he has met, into the classroom walks a hungry little bear. Johnny says, “‘As I was saying, it’s well to respect the rights of bears. I think this little fellow’s hungry.’” The children feed the bear most of their fourteen lunches and after he is well filled Johnny Appleseed says, “‘Henry, can you and Sam look after this bear without getting into a fight?’” The boys do so happily and decide to call the bear Johnny.

This is a typical third-grade story.



Similar examples from second-grade or even first-grade books could be given. If a teacher follows the manual for this story, here are some of the questions the children must think about as they read, reread and discuss the story:

At the beginning, one boy calls Johnny a tramp.

At the end, the boys are saying "Sir." Why did they change? What about our attitudes to older people?

What about Johnny Appleseed's work?

Was he a person to respect?

Is fighting a good way of settling difficulties?

What did Johnny mean by showing respect for the rights of bears?

How did Johnny settle difficulties between two boys?

Is getting people to work together a good way of settling difficulties?

The second story is from "The Big Word" in the fifth reader, *The New Days and Deeds*. The big word is "responsibility." Robert learns to spell it for a spelling match at school which he dearly wants to win. But when his father is hurt, and the whole corn crop is in danger, he learns that responsibility is more than a word. He gives up the match for the sake of the family and he and his older brother begin to harvest the corn as partners in a job to be done.

In the reading and rereading of the story questions such as the following may be discussed:

What were the two sides of the

argument about Robert's going to the spelling match?

Did Robert exaggerate his real feelings when he talked to his brother?

While Mr. Beacham was deciding to pick the corn, what do you think was going through Robert's mind?

Do you think it was more important for Robert to do the farm chores or his homework?

Do Robert's and his brother's arguments over responsibility for feeding the animals remind you of similar arguments in your family?

Why is *responsibility* more than a word?

Not all stories have important meanings as found in the two illustrations and not all the questions can be answered simply. Indeed, one mark of a good discussion will be the suggesting of different kinds of answers to these questions and to others raised in the discussions.

The poem selected to illustrate the possibility of finding deeper meaning is Rachel Field's "If once you have slept on an island" found in different anthologies and readers.

"If once you have slept on an island

You'll never be quite the same"; In introducing the poem, the teacher has probably been able to use testimony from children who have actually been on islands—what they are like and how they felt when they were surrounded by water. Perhaps she has been able to show a copy of Golden MacDonald's and Leonard Weisgard's charming picture book

*The Little Island.* Then the children have been ready to hear the whole poem and perhaps parts of it two or three times. Now comes the time, when the poem has been savored, to look for possible deeper meanings.

Can we sometimes make our own islands?

Can we have an "island" in a tree-house or our own room?

Have you ever had a feeling you wanted to get away from brothers or sisters and just be alone?

Is it a good thing to go off by ourselves and just think things over quietly?

The teacher, with a greater breadth of experience, may know that escape to a private world is not always possible. She may have in mind John Donne's "No man is an Island, intire of it selfe; every man is a peece of the Continent." Most fifth or sixth graders are not ready for subtleties but they can often see that this poem and other good poems suggest ideas beyond the literal words. Again, the wise teacher expects different responses from different children. Some may be bored by the poem, others may be transported to private worlds.

Since, in the words of Walter de La Mare, "A poem may have as many different meanings as there are different minds" another teacher or child may prefer to discuss certain lines of the poem.

"But you'll see blue water and  
wheeling gulls

Wherever your feet may go."

How many of you can see pictures of the sea? What other

pictures do you see clearly? And so perhaps to the deeper truth that we all have memories and images which we may carry with us for the rest of our lives.

Perhaps some children will be attracted by the lines

"Oh, you won't know why and  
you can't say why

Such a change upon you came" and the whole question of events that have changed one's life will emerge. But with all these possibilities, the teacher must be aware that to some children this is just a poem about some other child and an idea that has nothing whatever to do with themselves. In a sense, this poem is not for them. But perhaps some other poem is!

The three examples illustrate the idea that deeper meanings can be found in different kinds of writing and books. Most children will read at the surface level habitually unless the teacher encourages occasional penetration into new territory. Such encouragement is most rewarding in imaginative literature. Even the second-grader can find some plus-values in the simple folk and fairy tales he is able to read. For the average child, by the time he can read fourth-grade materials a whole world of books and ideas is beckoning. The classroom and school libraries should contain works of literature, with ingredients of imagination and fantasy, as well as the factual books needed in a world where concrete knowledge accumulates so quickly. Imaginative literature is more intrepid in its approach to problems than a single

child or adolescent can be. A judicious mixture of fact and fiction is the aim of most teachers. Perhaps even the comics should not be written off as part of the imaginative literature which may stimulate thinking. For example, in a recent television program on humor, cartoonist Al Capp, originator of "Li'l Abner," called the comic strip "the world's most popular literary form." He went on to say,

"I think comics should create a cheerful, healthy disrespect for everything everyone tells us is perfect. It's true Daisy Mae is sweet and virtuous, but she is also one of the most irritating girls in the world—like practically every nice girl that practically every one of us marries."

Most comic strips do not contain "universal truths" but Capp suggests that, even here, the meanings one gets from reading depend upon the attitude one brings to reading and the habit of occasionally looking below the surface.

If the teacher is to help the third-grader or tenth-grader dive below the surface, the question may be asked, "But what do we look for?" The response to the question is as varied as pieces of literature or as individuals themselves, but the general answer lies in two words, *symbols* and *values*. Most children recognize the flag as a symbol; they know that the lion is a symbol of courage or that Mercury was a swift messenger. In addition, they can be helped to see symbols in the incident involving Johnny Appleseed, the

story of the farm boy who learned about responsibility, the poem about the islands, and most of the other imaginative literature they read and share. Johnny Appleseed himself is a symbol of the opening of the West to agriculture. Islands may be symbols of security or of withdrawal. So in every book, story or poem children with some help can discover meanings and symbols.

So with values. In literature children and adolescents can find many of man's most important social-ethical ideas. Our values are the things we live by. One man's values may be in Cadillacs or a full stomach, another in building beautiful bridges or in service to mankind. Values are usually described in the lovely words of our language such as truth, justice, loyalty and faith. These are puzzling and difficult ideas for adults and even more for children, and yet they are the foundations of our society. A child's or adolescent's grasp of such concepts is slow agrowing. Only a wide variety of experience can give some understanding of tolerance or perseverance or sacrifice, but sometimes the process of getting to understand such ideas can be quickened through literature.

Such talk of values may make reading and the teaching of reading seem, to some, a difficult and grim affair. It is difficult, but it need not be grim. The teacher has neither the time, the energy, nor the background to ferret out all values in a piece of literature. Some stories *are* to be read quickly and forgotten. Teacher and



children alike must relax over their reading and have fun with much of it. From the adult point of view, the point is made nicely in a recent issue of the *Columbia University Forum* in an article by Norman Podhoretz, entitled, "Why I Can't Get Through *The Charterhouse of Parma*." His point is that even a great novel is not for all of us. It has to be *relevant*, to talk somehow about life as one is living it from day to day. Just being a classic is not enough of a true cause for reading by an adult or a child.

Similarly, we must always remember that children read a great deal of "trash." What is worthless to the serious adult may still have some function in the child's life. Not all reading is a search for ultimate values. Cornelia Otis Skinner makes the point nicely in her book *Family Circle*. She says:

"I wish I could state that my reading matter was the sort which gave marked indications of instinctively esoteric choice, for I cherish a grudge filled with envy against those biographers who claim that their nursery shelves groaned (the verb is apposite) with lovingly thumbbed-up volumes of Henty, Scott, Fenimore Cooper, and Maria Edgeworth. My taste in literature was a good deal like my taste in art, which ran riotously true to Harrison Fisher. The furthest I could go in the classics was Howard Pyle's *Knights of the Round Table*, and then only because I could ruin the pages by hand-coloring the black-and-white

illustrations. *Sara Crewe, or What Happened at Miss Minchin's* had its moments, but my real delight was that 'honeychile' of the Old South, *The Little Colonel*. Less genteel, but more absorbing than the *Little Colonel* books was a series known as *The Automobile Girls*, thrilling tales of four stalwart young things who, complete with goggles and linen dusters, toured the country in an open Chalmers, encountering every possible sort of adventure. These I read and re-read, and I regarded *The Automobile Girls in the Berkshires* with the same reverence I now hold for *War and Peace*. Then a schoolmate started lending me books from her aunt's library and, as Chapman's *Homer* burst upon Keats, Elsie Dinsmore swam into my ken. The *Elsie* books, to be sure, belonged to an earlier and more heavenly minded generation, and I don't know what their charm could have been, dealing as they did with a religious fanatic of a child, who spent her days praying, hymn-singing, and reproving her less spiritual contemporaries with lengthy quotations of Scripture. The author of this morbid series must have known how to cast a spell, for Elsie had a way of carrying piety to extremes as absorbing as those to which Dick Tracy today carries adventures. Her life of sanctimony I found most beautiful. Other children wanted to be like Joan of Arc or Queen Guinevere, or even like Captain Kidd. I wanted to be

just like Elsie Dinsmore. For a brief but intense period, I got religion."

But despite these examples of the fact that people will always want to read some trash, the teacher of reading and literature must accept responsibility for inculcating essential values, not in the sense of imposition, but in terms of discovery and thoughtful appraisal. The teacher in this case may be supplementing the efforts of home and church but cannot assume that the values are being developed elsewhere. The truth is that life offers the ten-year-old or the fifteen-year-old a bewildering variety of values. One neighbor may be relieving the suffering in the community but another may be chiefly interested in the "fast buck." And yet both are "neighbors." It is hard for children to develop what the psychologist calls a "scale of values." In the analogy of William Temple, the world is like a shop window in which someone, during the night, has mixed up all the price labels. In the morning, what shall we do? The high school senior may be looking forward to becoming what White

calls "the organization man" but he is also to be a husband, a father, a citizen—in other words, a person. In such complexity the child or youth needs guides. Television, the pulps and the movies are not ordinarily concerned with the higher values. In good books, stories and poems the child may read of courage or kindness or co-operation and perhaps grasp something of the importance of these ideas. Reading about such things at one's leisure, or in a small group where unhurried discussion follows, is our best hope that such values will become part of the lives of boys and girls.

In one of the apocryphal books associated with the Old Testament the prophet Esdras is given the splendid assurance:

"I shall light a candle of understanding in thine heart, which shall not be put out."

Perhaps the same promise can be made to children when teachers seek to help them find values in what they read.

*(From Vol. 12, No. 1, October 1958.)*

## Reading Is Thinking

by EMMETT A. BETTS

THE BETTS READING CLINIC  
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**M**Y CHILD can't read!" is a common complaint of parents. When asked what they mean, parents explain that Johnny doesn't have the necessary phonic skills to learn words. It is true that word (telling-the-child-the-word) method of teaching beginning reading has produced many nonreaders and crippled readers. While phonic skills are essential in learning to read, reading needs are not met by massive doses of isolated drill on phonics.

It is true that too many children do not know phonic and other word-learning skills and are, therefore, handicapped in their reading. There is also evidence that more of our pupils need help on *how to think* in a reading situation. But too often parents believe their children can read when they are merely pronouncing words.

Most parents can tell that a child is reading poorly or not at all when he cannot identify written words. But it takes a competent teacher to identify the six-year-old who repeats the exact words of an author to answer a question, the eight-year-old who does not relate names (antecedents) to pronouns, or the older student who has not learned to tell the difference between facts and opinions. In short, professional competence is needed to assess the learning needs of pupils and to guide their development into truly able readers.

### Strategy

For developing thinking skills and abilities, highly competent teachers have in mind a well-conceived master plan:

*How to identify and provide for individual differences in needs and levels of achievement within the classroom (1).* Master teachers recognize the limitations of standardized tests for estimating an individual's (1) independent reading level, (2) teaching or instructional level, and (3) specific needs. For this reason, they make maximum use of systematic, informal observations of pupil behavior in reading situations. They know that a pupil cannot be taught how to think when the instructional material is so difficult he finger points his way slowly under each word or gives up in despair. They also know that the best reader in the class can realize his full potential only when he is dealing with interesting materials that challenge his thinking. Therefore, they *plan in advance* to organize their classes in different types of groups to provide equal learning opportunities for all pupils.

*How to identify and classify comprehension needs, as a basis for when and what to teach (3, 13, 14).* Competent teachers preplan—that is, map their strategy—to teach children how to think in different types of read-

ing situations. They consider large groups of pupil needs:

1. Does the group have the necessary personal experiences for making a concept? Hal, for example, cannot estimate the distance from New York to San Francisco. During the discussion, however, he tells about a 500-mile trip to visit his grandmother, which he had helped to plan on a road map. His teacher helps him to use his personal experience with 500 miles to estimate on a map of the United States the 2600-mile airline distance. From this point, Hal continues to develop his concepts of space. Equally important, he takes new interests to reading.

2. Does the group use language effectively to deal with ideas (2)? Language serves at once to express and to shape our thoughts. In other words, we think with language. For this reason relatively simple language may be used to discuss everyday ideas, but complex language is used to discuss abstract ideas.

*Penny, ball, dictionary, and raccoon* are labels for things in the physical world; that is, we can point to a *ball* or a *dictionary*. *Roundness*, on the other hand, is a quality, or an abstraction. *Cottage, dwelling, or structure* can be used to represent different levels of abstraction. In life we can point to a *cottage* but not to *cottage*, to a *dwelling* but not to *dwelling*, to a *structure* but not to *structure*. At their successive levels of abstraction, *cottage, dwelling, and structure* are shorthand representations of increasingly complex concepts. It is with these nonverbal and

verbal abstractions that we do our thinking. So, we teach pupils how to abstract and generalize, and help them develop an awareness of their use of abstractions.

*And, or, but, for, etc.*, are connecting words which get their meanings from language. They connect or show relationships between ideas. The meanings of these words are taught, therefore, in their language settings.

*Ten, minute, mile*, and other definite terms can be interpreted when the pupil has certain concepts of quantity, size, etc. However, he may trip over *almost, long, soon*, and other indefinite terms unless he has been given cause to think about their relative values.

To improve the interpretation of what he reads, the child is made aware of the important ways in which the meanings of words shift. For example, *talent* may mean "musical talent" or "the Biblical thirteen talents"; that is, two different things.

Comprehension is improved by an understanding of the structure or organization of language. Often the sentence gives a clue to the meaning of words. An appositional explanation ("Thor, the god of war,") may tip the scale of understanding. An index type of clue may explain a new term: "The *thralls* were the carpenters, the fence builders, the fagot carriers." Then again, a classification type of clue gives needed detail: "These people lived on the valley's neat farms and sowed barley, wheat, and other *grains*." These and other types of context clues are con-

sidered in the teacher's strategy to improve thinking abilities.

Relationships between subject and predicate, between modifying and independent clauses, and between modifying phrases and other sentence elements are hazards to comprehension until the child understands them. Equally important are the meanings of different types of linking, separating, and enclosing punctuation, as, for example, when the dash is used to "direct the reader's attention backward" (15).

*How an author develops a story or presents information, as a basis for preparing a teaching plan.* Master teachers have learned that the best motivation for reading is the pupil's inner drive to learn — his questions and other expressions of purposes. Consequently, they plan to know each selection used for intensive directed reading activities with a group. This knowledge helps them take the group smoothly and promptly into the introduction of a well-written story or informational selection.

The introduction is usually a brief, stimulating setting for the story. For example, the title of Lee Wyndham's "Grandma's Ostrich" causes both children and adults to ask, "Why did Grandma have an ostrich?" This question is answered clearly and provocatively in the first few paragraphs.

When teachers *know* a selection, they can skillfully guide the pupils' reading from the introduction into the main body of it. After the pupils learn that Grandma "inherited" the ostrich from a defunct circus of

which she was part owner, they always ask, "What did Grandma Jones do with the ostrich?" Reading to answer this question takes them through the main part of the story.

When the pupils learn how Grandma Jones taught the ostrich to behave, they usually ask, "But will she be able to keep him?" As they read the conclusion of the story, they learn how a special event resolved the conflict, leaving them with a sense of satisfaction.

By *planning* their strategy before using a selection to develop skills, master teachers prepare themselves to develop (1) *interest*, (2) *phonic* and other word-learning skills, and (3) *thinking* abilities in the field of action — the guided reading of the story.

*How a teaching plan is organized as a basis for making the best use of teaching opportunities.* When competent teachers guide individualized reading they plan ahead to make accessible to their pupils (1) books at their *independent* reading levels and (2) books that can be used to develop new interests and skills. When guiding a directed activity in a basic reader, however, they group the pupils so that the first reading is done at the teaching or instructional level, and the rereading can be done independently (1).

These master teachers know that a selection or a book challenges their pupils when it presents new learnings. They also know that when a child is frustrated by the difficulty of the material, interest wanes sharply and comprehension is defaulted.



When making systematic use of a basic textbook teachers familiarize themselves with the strategy of the authors—the organization of the teaching plans. First, they learn how the pupils are prepared for reading a selection, especially the attention given to developing interests and concepts to be taken to it.

Second, they note the kinds of suggestions given for guiding the first or silent reading of it. In this part of the plan they give special consideration to the ready availability of specific help on both phonic and thinking needs which may arise.

Third, they evaluate informal suggestions, study-book use, and other help given for rounding out learning experience so that growth is insured.

### **Tactics**

One of the earmarks of a successful teacher is the ability to plan strategy for insuring the necessary conditions of learning. Skillful planning (1) places a premium on individual differences, (2) permits a sharp focus on the specific thinking needs of the pupils, (3) makes the most of the teaching opportunities in instructional material, and (4) gives a set for the wise selection and use of tactics or teaching procedures. Above all, the teacher is free to use the author's guide book with discretion.

Master teachers plan to help their children find out "what the author says"; that is, do literal reading. But they do much more: they plan to have the pupils learn how to "think about what the author says," to do critical reading (4).

In preparing the pupils for reading a selection in a story book, for a study-book activity, or for pursuing a major interest in some curriculum area, master teachers guide them into *thinking* about "what we know" and "what we want to know." The first step assesses their interests, attitudes, and concepts which they take to the activity. The second step heightens interest and establishes clear-cut purposes to guide their thinking. In short, the teacher uses sound tactics for starting the pupils on the road to critical thinking, to the considered evaluation of ideas and concepts.

With a general purpose and specific questions in mind, the pupils are ready to locate and evaluate sources of relevant information. This activity requires a consideration of the reputation of authors, dates of publication, etc., even when using basic readers and study books.

In surveying the materials the pupils are made aware of the difference between facts and opinions. They learn, for example, that the following are statements of fact because they are verifiable:

"In August of 1620, two vessels sailed from England, headed for the new world."

"The temperature in this room is 80 degrees Fahrenheit."

They will learn that a great many statements are opinions, or expressions of attitudes, and are not verifiable:

"You will have fun with it."

"This room is hot."

When pupils learn to discriminate between facts and opinions they tend

to do less arguing and more discussing. Equally important, they are better prepared to select information *relevant* to their purposes.

In testing the relevance of material pupils learn to answer these questions: (1) What does the author say? (2) Is the statement a fact or an opinion? (3) Does the statement answer my question? (4) How can I use this statement? (5) What other help did the author give on my question?

Many kindergarten children learn to judge between highly relevant and totally irrelevant statements. As children learn how to think at succeeding school levels, they make closer judgments of the relevance between statements.

Judging the relevance of statements to purposes plays a major role in thinking. First, the pupil evaluates relevance of sub-points to each other and to the main points in an outline. Furthermore, he consistently uses questions or statements, sentences or phrases to parallel language structure with his ideas. Second, he evaluates relevance in visualizing both stories and information: sequences of important events in a story or experiment, organization of material on maps, charts, slides, etc. Third, he uses relevant facts in solving a mystery, in using the results of an experiment, in making social judgments, etc. That is, straight thinking is required for drawing conclusions from related facts or from cause-effect relationships (5, 10, 11, 12).

In following through on their strategy for teaching children how to think, teachers are confronted with

a subtle, but potent, tactical situation: Attitudes. This situation can be summarized as follows.

1. The child's interpretation of a selection depends upon the attitudes he takes to it. Therefore, preparation for reading includes the assessment of attitudes toward the topic. Favorable attitudes increase comprehension, while unfavorable attitudes interfere with comprehension.

2. The child's attitudes influence recall. Favorable attitudes promote ease and vividness of recall, and unfavorable attitudes tend to produce hazy, confused ideas.

3. Favorable attitudes increase interest in a topic or a type of selection.

4. Individual attitudes are modified by peer discussions.

### In Summary

Contrary to popular opinion, children can be taught how to think. Their ability to think is limited primarily by their personal experiences and the uses they make of them in problem solving, in abstracting and generalizing to make concepts, in judging, and in drawing conclusions. Under competent teacher guidance children gradually learn to think, within the limits of their rates of maturation, or inner growth (6, 8, 9).

From available evidence it appears that children who have not learned to think far outnumber those who have not learned necessary phonic skills. (Both, of course, are crippled readers or non-readers!) Consider the number of children who can pronounce *fearless*, for example, but who think it means "afraid." How

many children cannot divide  $1/3$  by 4 because they have merely memorized a meaningless rule about "inverting and multiplying?" Or, how many high school graduates cannot subtract a minus 2 from a plus 10, because they have never related the mathematical process to the use of a thermometer? How many children can pronounce astronomical numbers and yet cannot estimate the coast-to-coast distance across the United States? How many children try to achieve variety of sentence structure by the mechanical rearrangement of sentences rather than by the careful consideration of the ideas they wish to express? The answers to these and related questions offer undisputed evidence of the need for teaching children how to think.

The mere pronunciation of words, the memorization of phonic or mathematical rules, and other emphases on rote memory and mechanics lead to the use of empty words. This false security in words leads to the acceptance of a carload of words without a single idea. The acceptance of word manipulation rather than the thinking about ideas is called *verbalism*. And verbalism can become a malignant disease in education, dooming the would-be learner.

But there is hope, real evidence of progress in understanding the strategy and tactics of teaching children how to think. In the last ten years, four outstanding books have been published on the psychology of thinking. Writers of pedagogical textbooks in social studies, science, arithmetic, and reading have begun

to apply the conclusions reached by psychologists. Lastly, it is highly significant that this issue of *THE READING TEACHER* is dedicated to the proposition that children can be taught how to think.

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# Critical Reading Is Creative Reading and Needs Creative Teaching

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THE TERM critical reading is perhaps not sufficiently accurate to describe its nature. It attempts to point out, somewhat subtly, that there are two distinctly different types of reading. First there is the casual, indifferent, effortless reading—usually the kind indulged in when in a hurry to find out how the hero will be rescued from the cliff, or when carelessly glancing through the latest news account of war progress, or when reading a required assignment with one eye on the clock in order to be in time for the movie.

It is clear that, while we may snatch some meaning from such reading, there is no danger that we will overstuff our minds with what we get. This is *not* critical reading. Of course we may be matching all speed records and may even be inviting arrest for exceeding the speed limit, but rate of reading is not at issue here.

On the other hand, however, we sometimes read more carefully, more searchingly. We get more and richer meanings not only about what the author said but about what he really *meant* by what he said. We get some inferences from hints dropped; some recognition of what the author may have omitted, deliberately or by chance; some awareness of the author's shrewdness or naivete; a

glimpse of the significance of some half-buried remark as it suddenly throws light on a personal problem; some evaluation of the writer's frankness or sincerity or slant. This is indeed critical reading.

## Critical Reading Is Creative

The word "critical," however, evokes an image of someone shaking a finger at the author. That meaning is not intended, although criticism of the author might be an element in some critical reading. The interpretation intended is allied to the expression "critical *thinking*" or "critical *reasoning*" and we have reference therefore to reading with a thoughtful attitude. I suggest several other terms that may perhaps be employed more appropriately, namely:

Reflective reading

Active reading

Interpretive reading

Creative reading

Of these, the last is my favorite. Actually, the act of creation takes place in this kind of reading because the reader becomes a co-author as he goes on. He keeps adding to what the author writes. He adds his enrichment of meaning, he visualizes, he recalls experiences from his own life that confirm or deny certain statements, he sees their relevance to other current conditions, he decides what he is willing to accept, he guesses

ahead (even if some guesses are wrong), perhaps he catches the author in some blunder.

In short, he is truly creating a richer article than the author ever intended—richer at least for the reader. He enjoys his reading all the more because he has made a challenging game of it. It is like a game of tennis. Imagine how dull a tennis game would be if you merely sat on a bench at the base line and struck occasionally, and lazily too, only at the balls that came your way. But see how different the game becomes when you play it with energy, trying for everything you can possibly reach. So with creative reading, which you appreciate all the more when you are active in it, and swing at every clue the author throws at you.

### **Not Only for Advanced Readers**

It would really be too bad if, from the description thus far, any one were led to believe that this kind of reading is only for the elite, and that even they indulge in such extravagance only rarely. That impression would be entirely erroneous, for the need for interpretive reading takes place as far down as the primary grades. Readers of the first grade are expected to figure out what happened to Henny Penny's friends when they went into Foxy Woxy's hole and never came out again. Some first graders might believe it was the cozy atmosphere of the hole that kept them there, but it should not take long for the teacher to guide them into a better deduction.

In a third grade reader, we read that the Pied Piper, having successfully piped all the rats into oblivion, now comes to the mayor for his payment. The mayor, with a smug smile, replies that since he only played and did not work, he deserves no gulden. The piper does not smile, but turns away and leaves. This is the point at which the teacher needs to ask the children to ponder on the significance of that unsmiling face, and possibly to make some anticipatory guesses.

No, it is not true that critical reading is limited to the elite.

Nor is it true that such reading should be expected only under unusual conditions and attended by heroic effort. The good reader (although I admit that at present there are too few of him) engages in this kind of reading during most of his reading time, and for all reading that he regards as worthwhile. Nor does it tax him in any way, for he makes his inferences with but imperceptible pauses. And when he does pause, he finds relish in re-living an appropriate and parallel experience, or in other creativity. Yes, I suppose you might call it reading with effort, but if it is effort, it is certainly pleasant effort rather than painful, and it permits a richness of understanding and keen appreciation.

Most students at the secondary school level, and many below that level, could be led to acquire the ability to read critically or creatively. It requires teaching techniques to develop interpretational skills, techniques that are a far cry from the all-too-frequent recommendation of

"letting" children learn by their own reading. These skills are not attained merely by wide reading. A dependence on the magic of the books themselves is inadequate to teach children the subtle mental processes involved in creative reading and in the finer levels of appreciation.

### Related to Appreciation

It is not by mere chance that creative reading and appreciation were paired together in the same sentence, for there is a rapport that binds them inseparably. Creative reading derives inferences from context and makes numerous implications about them. The enriched meaning thus obtained produces appreciation.

Naturally we tend to think of appreciation as being limited to literature. And appreciation of literature, according to many opinions, means enjoyment, pleasure, fun, a reaction which is supposed to be produced by the literary content itself, without the slightest need for effort by the reader. Those opinions are justified, however, only when we consider appreciation at its *lowest level*, for appreciation can take place at a number of levels.

### Levels of Appreciation

To explain these levels, let us for a moment consider football and the ways in which it might be appreciated. For most of the audience in the stadium, even the most uninitiated, there is a great deal of tense enjoyment in watching a player break from the scrimmage and run with the ball, chased by a whole team. In a moment he is caught and violently

thrown while a half dozen players pile on top of him. This is action. This is excitement. This is thrilling. No one needs an education in appreciation to appreciate this scene.

But to certain other fans, another scene was taking place. They watched the formation of the opposing team and knew that it was anticipating a run through the center. When the anticipation was confirmed, they observed the line-up neatly blocking the "interferers" who might have helped the runner, and they saw the strategy unfolding that placed other blocks in the potential path of the runner and that downed him before he had gone three yards.

There was less cheering by this second type of fan, but a great deal more quiet satisfaction and a pleased feeling with his own mental alertness. This, too, was appreciation. It ignored the obvious, the grossly exciting, and concentrated with understanding on the subtle values. So football, too, has its levels of appreciation, the uninformed and the informed.

In music we all respond, of course, to the tom-tom of the jungle beat that marks all jazz, or, in the case of dance music, the regular beat of the accompaniment that carries over the many variations of rhythm in the melody. It sets our toes a-dancing even while we are sitting. It is appreciated because it tugs at the native roots of our emotions. But it takes no learning to respond to it. It is appreciation at the low level. It is different in the case of music which depends for its appeal on delicate nuances of melody, or harmony, or

rhythm, or timbre, or the artistic combination of them. But it takes learning, even if it is self-learning, to develop appreciation at this upper level. Self-learning, however, even at best, is haphazard and uneconomical.

So it is with literature. The great majority of young readers, even the so-called good readers among them, find appreciation only in the action, violence and suspense offered by their stories. "What's going to happen next" is the great driving force. True, this is appreciation—one kind of appreciation. There is another kind that seeks eagerly to obtain a more enriched, more comprehensive understanding of their reading, for literature is literally filled with meanings not stated by the author at all. He does not inform us that a character is a scoundrel; he permits us to find out, though somewhat gradually, through what he does, what he says, what others say to him, or how they react to him. His very conversation doesn't mean what it says, so that we have to read between the lines to infer what he really means. In other words, facts, hidden or partially hidden, are revealed to us only by our own thinking and interpretation. The author rarely tells us that a woman is angry, but we sense the fact when we read of her clenched fingers and the white prints left in her palm by her fingernails.

Similarly we use clues to permit us to follow the character as he changes or develops. We become aware of his motives even when no one has actually expressed them. We learn to visualize his very appearance, and we

can, with guidance, even learn to hear, mentally, the very voice and expression of the characters as they speak—the coldly polite tone, the sneering contempt, the whining voice of cowardice and fear, the haughty anger. This ability to "audize," if I may be permitted the coining of a much needed term, adds immeasurably to appreciation.

Then, of course, there are numerous hints that permit us to guess ahead, and there is considerable satisfaction when we find we have guessed correctly. Sometimes these hints are found in a single clue word or phrase. More often they can be reconstructed from our knowledge of the character types and their motives and the probable results when certain clashing motives meet head on. The reader's personal reactions to the characters and his changing sympathies as he follows shifts in their actions and motives all add to his increasing appreciation. He can also, as a good reader, recognize the author's merit in his treatment of the story. Are the characters genuine, or only stick-figures? Are the situations and events the plausible results of preceding events and motives, or does the author place a heavy reliance on contrived coincidences?

### **Ability to Read with Interpretation**

We have seen, therefore, the higher ranges of appreciation, of critical action, creative reading. It may not always be exciting, but it is far more satisfying and far more vivid to the mind. However, it is not acquired

easily. It takes learning, even effort, but it is well worth it. Furthermore, within the scope of his reading vocabulary and ideational understanding, it is within the grasp of the poorer reader as well, and it can enliven his sense of appreciation, too.

When one has acquired some of this interpretational skill, there is a tendency to lift one's taste in fiction more or less in accordance with the order indicated below:

- from stories of adventure, action and incident.
- to stories of character and character development.
- to stories of background and ways of life different from our own.
- to stories with complex plot.
- to stories of mood.
- to stories of problems, social and other.

These are certainly not presented in any precise order, but they represent a kind of hierarchy of taste and discrimination that shows an upgrading of appreciation, rather than a contentment with the level of the adventure story.

However, none of this improvement in appreciation is likely to result from "just reading." If we follow such a principle, we continue to provide children with books at their present level of ability and interest. We may be pleased that they are reading, but they may remain forever at the same level, despite continuing reading. Even in the case of those pupils who are reading better books, we may be getting the misleading impression that their appreciation is greater. Yet

they may be reading those books only for incident and action, skipping and missing all the inferences that clarify character, purpose, trends and the like. These children might just as well get their stories from the comic strip booklets; it would be much more economical of time and effort.

No, extensive reading is a desirable habit, but it falls short of developing critical reading. On the contrary, it is likely to accomplish the very reverse, for it encourages rapid reading. And rapid reading is unfriendly to critical reading, and therefore also to genuine appreciation.

### **Literature vs. Straightforward Writing**

What is needed by the reader is the ability (or appreciational skills) to recognize the clues left scattered by the author, and to translate them into interpretations instead of passing them by blithely and blindly. He needs those skills, and he also needs time, the time gained by some slowing down of his reading rate or by occasional pauses as he reflects over a memory-stirring phrase, or by an occasional chuckle of satisfaction as he finds an earlier guess suddenly confirmed by the turn of events. His reading rate resembles the continental habit of drinking which permits man to savor the taste as he slowly sips an aged brandy. The common method of reading literature, even good literature is rather like the more common method of drinking characterized by the phrase "down the hatch!"

Actually, in the absence of such interpretations and inferences, much



of literature becomes meaningless. If a story is read only for its literal meaning, a great portion of it—anywhere from fifty to seventy per cent—fails to be understood. Authors tend to use every artifice to avoid straightforward statements, relying instead largely on indirect methods. "From one rusty nail on the back of a hall bedroom door," writes one author, "hung all the wardrobe she possessed." Immediately we obtain, through the clever selection of one striking detail, a picture of abject poverty, of a dingy room, of a discouraged girl in a cheap boarding house. Why didn't the author say so directly then? Not to mislead us. His purpose was rather to challenge our imagination, to arouse vivid imagery, to prevent the disinterest that would have been the reaction to a matter-of-fact presentation.

Comic strip artists, of course, employ direct statement and exaggerated pictorial presentation to make obvious disclosures about characters and their motives. But that's because their appeal is to the immature mind.

Permit me again, even at the cost of repetition, to emphasize that the quality of appreciation is thin if without rich understanding, and that the great proportion of the understanding of literature lies not in what the author says, but in *what he does not say*, and in the reader's responses of thought and feeling that he himself contributes to the author's content. If it is at all possible to summarize the explanation of so complex a process within a single sentence, then it is that sentence.

### Suggestions for Method

There are naturally so many differences among the vast number of clues offered by authors that each clue, whether phrase or situation, seems entirely individual in nature. At first impression, therefore, it would appear impossible to find enough similarities among them to organize them into groups. Yet to present children with a confusing mass of varied clues would only result in baffling them. We can do better by directing their thinking toward one aspect of inference at a time, or one type of clue, and help them to acquire some criterion by which to recognize that type and respond to it appropriately. In this process we will be developing the skills of appreciation which can then begin to be employed with growing independence. The more skills, the greater the capacity for independent appreciation.

A careful analysis of clues, based upon experiences in which large numbers of children have displayed considerable success, discloses many possibilities for the organization of clues into groups. One such group will refer to character description, and we shall illustrate from this group. Almost every story offers clues of appearance that give hints of character ("shrewd and sharp eyes, but a mouth that curled upward at the corners," "eyes that gleamed coldly under shaggy eyebrows"). There are things *said* to the character, about him, by him. There are his actions. Major actions are easily recognizable, but there are also subtle actions ("his lips tightened,"

"his chin rose," "he glanced down"). These are ways in which others respond to him (with fear or distrust, or tenderness).

In the one aspect of character quality, we can find fairly specific types of clues. Pupils can be led toward concentration, during a series of lessons with a number of stories, on this one kind of clue. Even though they range from simple to difficult and even though no two are identical, there is usually enough similarity to permit such emphasis.

Similarly, other types of clues fall conveniently into groups and may be developed in the same way.

In the cause of brevity, I shall merely list the types of appreciational skills that should be developed.

*Finding inferences about*

- character
- appearance
- setting
- motives of the characters
- their actions
- their feelings
- anticipations
- the meaning of figurative language

*Recognizing clues from which inferences may be drawn*

- conversation by, to, and about a character
- his actions, gross and subtle
- few but suggestive details
- emotional words and connotative expressions
- figurative language, especially irony and exaggeration
- forebodings

unusual language style (choppy sentences or telescoping of events to show haste; sentence inversion for word emphasis)

Of course the list is far from complete, but it contains enough to help any resourceful reader. The teacher's task is one of bringing to the attention of her pupils these clues and helping them in their efforts to derive inferences. As explained earlier, it is best to concentrate on one type at a time, thus enabling the student to seek and recognize more readily the added understanding in that type. This is accomplished by questions, of course, but questions that tend to rouse curiosity and eagerness to think about possible answers.

In any given story it will be neither advisable nor possible to *limit* one's questions to a single type of inference or clue. Other questions will inevitably arise, stimulated by the story itself. They will help also to maintain the continuity of and interest in the plot. Nevertheless there should be an *emphasis* on the one type being studied, largely by finding many instances of that type. Questions on other types may be limited or touched on only incidentally.

Will this slow down the reading? Naturally. It will even break up the story at many points. But let us face the fact that these interruptions are vitally necessary for the purpose of learning to appreciate. Reading for easy enjoyment alone may be left for other stories and other occasions.

But do these interruptions necessarily interfere with appreciation or

with pleasure in the reading? On the contrary, the teacher who learns this technique will find her class more excited and more enthusiastic about such reading than ever before. The taste of *complete* understanding and of mental responses never made before is a thrilling experience to them. The added understandings are well worth the time they take.

### In Conclusion

A competent reader recognizes and interprets clues with little or no slowing down of his reading although that depends of course upon the difficulty of the content. Certainly Browning's poetry cannot be read effectively at normal speed. However, whether slow or fast, the reader does his interpreting while in the very act of reading, rather than after he has completed the novel or play. That points the way in which pupils need to be taught how to read for appreciation, namely, by interpretations in the very course of reading.

Since children are only at the stage of learning how to interpret, the pace must be considerably slowed, with pauses and even interruptions, while the teacher guides them in recognizing the numerous places where their thinking has to supply what the author has deliberately left unsaid.

In these pauses they can also develop the habit of searching for personal experiences or current conditions that give richer meaning to a given incident, and for their own emotional responses that yield deeper appreciation of their reading. As this process goes on, and as children are encouraged to engage more and more independently in these processes, they will tend to acquire skill and ease in reading interpretively, and they will achieve the precious goal we so earnestly seek—a genuine love for good literature, a preference for it, and skill in the process of critical reading.

(From Vol. 6, No. 4, March 1953.)

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## Creating a Challenging Classroom Environment

by RUTH G. STRICKLAND  
PROFESSOR OF EDUCATION  
INDIANA UNIVERSITY

NOTHING PERTAINING to present day schools would astonish teachers of two or three generations ago more than the change which has taken place in the physical appearance of the environment in which "schooling" takes place. Drabness has been replaced by color, bleakness and emptiness have been filled with carefully contrived interest centers that call out for attention, rigidity of time and place have given way to flexible, moveable equipment which lends itself to many purposes and which can be arranged and rearranged to fit the needs of the job to be done. The term "educational wastelands" has been hurled at present day schools by some who feel that education should be concerned solely with the mind. Those of us whose memories go back to childhoods spent in schools which were bleak, dull, and distinctly unchallenging find ourselves inclined to think of those schools as tragically wasteful of much that we now consider most important and most precious in human potentiality.

The task of each individual during the years of childhood and youth is the building of the self. Home, school, and community furnish building material in the form of experiences and furnish also stimulation, encouragement, and guidance, but the child does the building. It is because of our increasing understanding of this fact

that the environment with which we surround the child assumes great importance.

### **A Comfortable, Non-Static Classroom Environment Stimulates Children**

An attractive classroom as background for the child's school experience affords him pleasure and certain aesthetic values. A comfortable classroom environment gives him a sense of security and well-being with possible release of energy for purposes beyond just keeping the organism in equilibrium. But a classroom environment can be both attractive and comfortable and still be a passive, static environment which does little or nothing in and of itself to stimulate a child to reach out for experiences which help him to expand and grow. In fact, attractiveness and comfortableness which do nothing to stimulate curiosity, encourage exploration, thinking, and problem solving—which keep the child in a passive, receptive, and vegetative sort of equilibrium—can stand in the way of growth. Intellectual growth is largely a result of finding oneself discontent with the stage in which one is and a consequent reaching out to build a new equilibrium on a higher intellectual level.

Centers of interest, bulletin boards, and display areas in a classroom are

of greatest value when they raise problems that cry out for solution, when they suggest exploration and experimentation, and when they raise questions that need answers. The material for solving the problems, finding answers to the questions and carrying on the suggested exploration must be available without too much frustrating search and labor or the child will put forth some effort and then give up the matter and be almost worse off for his experience. Intellectual curiosity and interest are valuable and rewarding only as the child learns to satisfy them. Curiosity without initiative in finding answers produces no real growth.

An art center can be arranged to suggest a number of types of creative experiences. A science area can provide material for observation and experimentation together with books and materials to turn to for interpretation and for stimulating ideas for further work. An arithmetic center can be set up to encourage exploration with weights and measures and with concrete material for number manipulation and for the solving of problems. Bulletin boards and display spaces for illustrative material in the social studies can suggest areas for further study and intellectual problems for the children to bite their teeth into. The classroom library can be arranged and managed by the children so that they are encouraged to enrich not only themselves but each other through their reading. Space for displaying the interests of parents as well as children provides satisfactions and also reveals to children

new possibilities which they can exploit.

### **Teachers Can Be Resourceful**

The values that lie in the physical setting of the classroom and the arrangement and use of materials are largely of the teacher's own making. The teacher is, unquestionably, the most important single element in the child's school environment. She stimulates and guides the growth of each child in a variety of ways. Certainly, the way in which she arranges the learning environment influences each child's curriculum experience. The direct teaching she does through planned lessons is designed to stimulate interest, develop skills as they are needed, and continuously help the child to build inner resources for independent learning and growth.

The teacher's own intellectual interests and enthusiasms are vitally important in stimulating the growth of interests in children. A child's interests are not inherent in himself nor in his learning environment though the potentialities are there. All interests are acquired through experience of one sort or another. Interest and enthusiasm are contagious. A teacher who shares her own interests with children, whenever they are appropriate, will find that children are expanding their interests to keep pace. The teacher's interests and enthusiasms help children to see in all sorts of situations possibilities of which they might otherwise be unaware. They help children also to sense the satisfactions that exist in continuous growth and expansion. Overstreet



has said that a mature individual is one who is forever maturing—who never reaches the end of the line but is forever moving forward in the direction of greater maturity.

### **Teachers Need to Expand and Deepen Eagerness to Learn**

All teachers mean to expand and deepen children's eagerness to learn, yet all too many of them actually do just the opposite. They underestimate the drive to learn which exists within children—at least some children. They are like the teacher who said to the girl who was delving into far more material than was necessary for the assignment. "Why do you do all of that when it isn't necessary?" The child answered, "I know, but don't you just like to feel your brain cells crackle?" A child who is an eager learner does like to get at the root of things, not just to find surface answers. Such children are utterly bored with much of the routine workbook and practice work that is assigned to them. They like to bite into really challenging problems and find ways to solve them. Even children of lesser ability with less zest for learning might break through their lethargy and become active seekers after knowledge and understanding, according to their individual levels of ability, if they had inspired leadership.

All teachers mean to help children learn to think and reason on ever higher levels. Yet all too often adherence to the plans the teacher has made in advance or the seeming pressure of "requirements" cause teachers to cut off thinking. "Never mind

that now; get on your work" or "We haven't time for that question now" puts the child off the track of his intellectual concern and dulls his interest to the point that the "now" never comes when he follows it through. Perhaps such children need to be encouraged to lay aside the group task while they follow through on the interest they have expressed and report back to the group, getting later whatever necessary values there may have been in the assignment by listening and participating while the other children check and evaluate their results.

### **Open-Ended Questions Are Vital**

More of the questions that are raised in the classroom need to be open-ended questions, answers to which cannot be completely rounded out and put away in pigeon holes. Children need to be guided to see that no vital question is ever fully answered. There is always more to learn than appears on the surface at the moment. Life tomorrow may make some of today's answers unsatisfactory, inadequate, or even unworkable. Lincoln Steffens, the famous journalist, wrote years ago of a practice he carried on with his son. Whenever a faucet leaked or anything about the home went awry, he called his son to say to him in effect, "See, here is something for you to do. Nobody yet has invented a faucet that won't leak (or perhaps, a lawnmower blade that will cut the wiry grass, an awning fabric that will not fade, or a means of doing something that is more economical of time and labor). There is

so much yet to be done that there are uses for all of the energy, intelligence, and initiative you have. The world needs all of it." It is inspiring to think what man, the world over, might achieve if each child could grow up with that concept firmly imbedded in his mind.

The better programs on television and radio broaden children's knowledge—a fact which is good. But they present a danger as well—the danger that children will be satisfied with snatches of knowledge, brief surface glimpses, and content to say, "I know about that. I saw it on television." Unless we help them, they may fail to realize how small a segment they have encountered, how little they really know, and how dangerous that little may be if it is out of perspective with the total situation.

Children must be helped to see and accept the fact that the human mind never attains its full potential growth—that the mind is in a continuous state of growth—the more one knows, the more there is to know. Tennyson had this in mind in his poem, *Ulysses*, when he said, "All experience is an arch wherethro' gleams an untravell'd world, whose margin fades for ever and for ever when I move."

### **Teachers Need to Know Available Resources**

To do all of this, teachers need to know the resources that are available in children's books as well as the resources available in the community—the human resources that can be drawn upon and the resources for observation, study, and experience

that are available through museums, industries, and agencies. Children's books are available in tremendous numbers, on all manner of topics and in all manner of styles of writing. Modern schools in this country and in England are making the building of libraries of children's books one of their main concerns at the present time. On visits to English schools, one of the resources pointed out with pride by many headmasters and headmistresses is the little library which they are eagerly expanding. Some of these libraries contain more of the good trade or story books published in this country than are found in many of our own schools. English educators appear to realize more clearly than do many teachers in this country that textbooks alone do not provide adequate education for children. A major task of every school is to make readers of children—not just people who *can* read but people who *do* read.

Children's interests and needs vary as completely as the children vary in appearance and in the home backgrounds from which they come. A large part of the task of creating a challenging environment for a child is concerned with studying him—his ways of thinking and responding and his interests and needs. The better the teacher knows a child the more successful she can be in providing the right kind of stimulation and guidance at the right time. There is an increasing number of books which can be used to meet emotional needs and can help children, who do not have in their own lives the problems

with which the book deals, understand and appreciate those who do face special, personal problems. *Windows for Rosemary* helps children understand a child, born blind, who learns to live happily with sighted people. *Blue Willow* helps children from secure homes understand the insecurity and the longing of the migrant child. The possibilities today are almost limitless but the teacher must know them and have a clear sense of psychological timing to help children gain in appreciation and understanding of people who differ from themselves.

### **Techniques for Using Resource Materials Need to Be Taught**

Children have to be taught techniques for using resource material so that they can use the resources for independent learning. Special programs for gifted children give attention to helping children learn how to learn through the use of reference material, the library, personal interviews, and any other available resource. More of this could be done in almost any classroom, anywhere. Children need to be made clearly aware of the fact that learning is not a function of schooling only, but a function of life itself.

Human relations provide a large part of the challenge in any classroom environment. The teacher's relationships with children are important but so are children's relationships with one another. Young children in most primary classrooms are given time and opportunity for sharing their out-of-school experiences

and interests as well as the individual and group interests within the classroom. Older children need time for this sort of sharing but most of their sharing can be on a considerably higher intellectual plane. They can be encouraged to develop individual hobbies and long term interests which can be shared with the group from time to time. Under the teacher's guidance, they can bring items of interest from their reading, their television viewing, and their individual research and exploration. Many items of current news from newspapers, magazines, and television are of limited value unless the reporter or the group takes time to build background. The conflicts of interest on the island of Cyprus or on the Israel-Jordan border mean little unless the children look into the matters of geographical location, historical background, and cultural differences that are operating. News of the Suez crisis means little unless the children take time to build some background for it and fit it into its setting. Helping children see the need for more understanding is the teacher's task—the children may not see deeply enough into the situation to know what they need for understanding. And surface awareness without desire for understanding has little educational value.

### **There Must Be Interaction**

There must be time in any classroom for children to mingle with each other, to share interests individually and informally, and, as one first-grade teacher realized, to browse among the

(Continued on Page 201)

# Developing Creative Thinking in Gifted Children Through the Reading Program

by WALTER B. BARBE

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**O**F MAJOR IMPORTANCE to teachers is the extent to which the gifted child differs from other children. Is his difference so great that he can not be taught effectively in the regular classroom? Are his needs so greatly different from other children that he will find little help in meeting them in the regular classroom? Unfortunately, the answers to these questions can not now be given with assurance. In some respects the gifted child does differ from other children, but in other ways he does not. Perhaps the only certain statement that can be made justifiably is that the gifted child is being neglected in many schools since merely leaving him to shift for himself, as is frequently the case, certainly is neglecting him. Even in those schools in which attempts are being made to provide more adequately for him, the efforts are often spasmodic and generally unsatisfactory. It is the purpose of the writers to discuss this neglected phase of the reading program.

## What Is Creative Thinking?

The distinguishing characteristic of gifted children is their creativity. It is this creativity which classifies them as gifted. Creativity should not be limited to art, music, poetry and so forth. When the term creativity is used, one

may think chiefly of productivity in the arts. Of equal importance is the ability to use ideas creatively, or to think creatively. It is this type of thinking which teachers may help develop in gifted children through the reading program. It may be developed through emphasis on the ability to understand and evaluate concepts without direct teaching.

Some of the skills in reading which may profitably be stressed include the following:

- Getting the main thoughts from reading selections.
- Differentiating what is important from the less important.
- Understanding inferred meanings.
- Relating one's own experience to the content.
- Analyzing critically what is read.
- Understanding subtleties.
- Recognizing one's own prejudices and biases, as well as those of the author.
- Appreciating conceptual presentations.

Perhaps all of the above items are only those skills which should be taught to every child. But they are skills which the gifted child, in particular, will be able to use effectively.

No child should be deprived of the opportunity to learn these skills, but it is within the gifted group that the greatest success will be met in teaching them.

### **Use of Vicarious Experiences**

Gifted children often enjoy vicarious experiences more than average children. They are better able to visualize situations, even those in which they have had no direct first-hand experience. The wise teacher will capitalize on this ability of gifted children.

Excessive emphasis on factual material may limit the thinking of gifted children. The gifted child will be able to go beyond the limitations set by factual presentations and create ideas of his own. He will be able to use these ideas in such a manner that he can make original contributions, instead of merely repeating what he has heard or memorized.

Of course, through reading and writing the gifted child may have abundant opportunities for original reaction. Children's literature is breaking away more and more from the rigid bounds of "this actually happened to you." While *If I Ran the Zoo* certainly may be used effectively with gifted children in the primary grades, they have another even better treat in store for them in the recent Dr. Seuss book, *On Beyond Zebra*. Many gifted children are discovering that Dr. Seuss really has an imagination. As one gifted child in the third grade recently said, "I wonder why I never thought of going beyond 'z' myself." If you haven't tried the Dr. Seuss books with gifted children (or

with all children, as a matter of fact) you have been missing a delightful experience.

### **Gifted Have Areas of Weakness**

Gifted children, as all children, have areas of weakness. They show considerable variability from task to task. And even those who are the best in some areas are perhaps not even average in others. Gifted children should be led to understand that even though they may excel in the area of mental activity, there are other areas in which they may not be so good. They should be led to feel that they are a part of a group in which different contributions are to be expected from different individuals.

Merely having the gifted child work on those areas in which he does not excel is insufficient. Along with the "gift" of superior mental ability goes a responsibility. The gifted child must not only work on his areas of weakness, he must also develop to the utmost his areas of strength. It is in the development of these areas of strength that the teacher must encourage creative thinking. The gifted child may be effective in passing along information to others, but if his gifts are never used in such a way that he gives something original to the world, he has failed to make his greatest contribution. With each gift goes responsibility. The teacher must help the gifted child recognize his particular responsibility.

### **Interests Must Be Developed**

While it is certainly true that gifted children have interests wider and



deeper than average children, it remains for the teacher to develop the worthy interests into meaningful, life-long pursuits. The superficiality of many interests is a characteristic of gifted children. Too scattered and varied interests may become actually a detriment to good adjustment later in life. Certain rather limiting decisions must be made by all people. The gifted child often must be helped to discriminate among his varied interests. Then he should be encouraged to intensify and extend some worthwhile and individually appropriate interests. If the teacher is able to develop genuine interests early in children, more opportunity is then given for development of these interests and the chance of the gifted child's actually making an original contribution is greatly increased.

### **Enrichment Is Important**

While it is certainly true that gifted children learn so rapidly that they often excel children several grades above them in their knowledge of skills, emphasis should be placed upon enrichment rather than acceleration. If the emphasis is on acceleration, the gifted child may have little time or opportunity to learn to think creatively. By being concerned instead with enrichment, the teacher has an opportunity to encourage creative thinking.

### **How Creative Thinking Is Developed**

One of the most important practices which a teacher can follow in developing creative thinking in chil-

dren is to do things herself which are creative. The teacher can do this only when she has a thorough knowledge of subject-matter and is well-prepared to present materials to the class. Perhaps in no other way than teaching by example can the teacher actually inspire creativity. A teacher who can do this is truly a good teacher. Gifted children especially will benefit from this type of teaching.

The following important considerations must be observed in encouraging creative thinking:

1. Merely allowing the child to repeat back in parrot fashion what he has read or heard, without evaluation or interpretation, lulls the gifted child into a false feeling of accomplishment. Certainly gifted children can memorize and repeat materials better than average children, but this is not the type of attainment that should be expected from them. By allowing the gifted child to do only this, and praising him because he has performed better than others, his tendency to think creatively remains dormant.

If the question "why?" is frequently asked, the gifted child will often be helped. In this way he may get out of the habit of making such statements as, "I liked it," "it was interesting," or "isn't it good (or pretty, cute, nice, etc.)." Such non-descriptive words do little to tell what is meant. Both in written and oral expression the gifted child should be encouraged to express his feelings, not in the limited terms which so many of us use too often, but in exact and interesting ways. The habit of inquiring "why?" will lead him to

examine causes and to think about statements.

In the reading clubs in the Major Work Classes of Cleveland, Ohio, where gifted children are placed for instruction in the skill subjects, emphasis is given to the child's feelings and interpretations, rather than to what he reads. How much better this is than the usual boring restatement of a story which everyone has already read.

2. An enjoyment of the process of reading as well as the results needs to be developed. For the child to be able to do creative thinking, he should enjoy the act of reading, writing, and thinking. The complaints that a child's eyes hurt, or head hurts, or neck hurts when he reads too much are indications that either something physically is wrong with the child and should be corrected, or that the child does not enjoy the process of reading.

Once the child has learned to enjoy the process of reading, then he can learn to think creatively as he reads. Creative reading involves more than the acceptance of the author's state-

ments as facts. It implies interpreting and analyzing what the author has said and then creating for one's self the ideas and reactions.

3. Only through an enriched curriculum can the teacher develop creative thinking. Strict regimentation does not create an atmosphere conducive to creative thinking. In order for children to think creatively, they must be encouraged to express themselves freely and not feel restrained because of fear of failure and ridicule. Enrichment includes the provisions of an opportunity to express one's individuality in an atmosphere in which there is stimulation and challenge. When enrichment is offered, gifted children learn to think creatively without coercion.

Only if our gifted children are taught to think and act in a creative manner can they develop to their maximum. Through the reading program, the teacher has an opportunity to enrich the experience of the gifted child and help him to think creatively.

*(From Vol. 9, No. 4, April 1956.)*

### **Creating a Challenging Classroom Environment**

*(Continued from Page 197)*

stimulating materials she had provided. Children do not come with ready-made purposes. They must develop them, as adults do, through roaming among areas of possibility, seeing what others are doing, trying a bit of this and a bit of that until an interest takes hold which the child wants to pursue further. Teachers can help children find their interests and pursue them but the real drive must

come, in the last analysis, from within the child.

A challenging environment is in part physical and material, to be sure, but it is mainly psychological and inspirational; it is the social, emotional, and intellectual challenge that counts and everything in the environment is built to that end.

*(From Vol. 10, No. 2, December 1956.)*

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# What RESEARCH Says to the Reading Teacher

BY

AGATHA TOWNSEND

Consultant, Educational Records Bureau

## Five Years of Reading Investigations

What kind of reading fare has research offered the teacher in the last five years? In what areas of reading has publication been most active? What kind of evaluation of the field does the itemization of research reflect? In other words, is research prosecuted and reported where the need is greatest, or do the studies reflect other forces of selection—such as availability of subjects for study, a tendency for the researcher to feel more secure if he works in well-charted seas, or even a tendency to follow fashions in school experimentation, a sort of academic keeping-up-with-the-Joneses?

The tallies which have been made, and which will be used in the attempt to answer these questions, are based on the successive reports entitled "Summary of Investigations Relating to Reading," each included in the February issue of the *Journal of Educational Research*. These summaries were for almost thirty years prepared by the late William S. Gray; the latest summary was completed by Helen M. Robinson. Since the dates covered by each survey ran to the end of the June preceding the date of publication, the studies for this last

five-year period were published between July 1, 1955 and June 30, 1960.

A grand total of 551 entries were annotated for these five years. For the most part, the list consists of individual journal articles and relatively brief bulletins, supplemented by a small number of books giving the results of experimentation or bibliographical research, conference reports, and extensive book lists.

An overview of the summaries confirms the impression that a relatively small number of journals account for the majority of the sources. Most of these are journals which cover other areas of educational or psychological research as well—the *Journal of Educational Research* comes immediately to mind—but these years have seen an increasing number of research journals which are specialized to reading; the increasing representation of research in *THE READING TEACHER* and the *Journal of Developmental Reading* is noteworthy. Some journals are devoted to the problems of one particular level of education, or to only a special aspect of education, and the reading articles reflect such divisions (articles on mass communication, the readership of newspapers,

and so on appear in the *Journalism Quarterly*). The character of educational journals actually has no little effect on the publication of research findings. Editorial necessities or proclivities may demand a balance of fare, so that only a certain number of research reports are provided for in the yearly scheme. It is hard to estimate the degree to which our own professional reading habits insulate us, too. A mathematics department may not know where to turn for references on the effect of reading skills on its own work. How much of the common complaint of high school and college teachers, that they'd like to do something about the reading of their students but don't know how to go about it, can be traced to the fact that many of the best articles on methods are reaching chiefly the elementary school audience?

There can be no doubt that the elementary school teacher is the audience for a large share of the research reports, and that his classrooms provide the source of much of the data for such research. A breakdown of the titles reveals that at least 159 of the 551 studies deal, on one level or another, with the elementary grades. When to this general category is added the number of studies which are primarily devoted to remedial reading with young pupils, the preponderance of articles dealing with the early years of schooling becomes even greater. The totals for the elementary grades are more than three times the number for the college years, and more than five times the number of studies dealing with

reading in the high school.

About ninety of the articles in the elementary field can be described as pedagogical. They deal with methods of instruction, ranging from the ways of assuring readiness for beginning reading to a small number of articles on higher-level skills such as critical reading and interpretation. As always, one is impressed not only by the scope of the research reported, but also by the strange gaps or lapses that seem to occur when the research that is reported is compared with what seems to be required. More than once in the five years Dr. Gray remarked that the grouping of pupils for instruction is "one of the most challenging faced today [1960]." Yet, altogether, the summaries for these years annotate only eight articles dealing with this problem.

Another large group of articles dealing with the elementary grades deals with theoretical issues. A small group within this category consists of analytical studies of the psychology of reading; a larger sample, about thirty reports, deals with the relationship of reading to intelligence, to progress in other school subjects, and to other aspects of pupil growth. In character, the reports on reading as part of the language arts and similar topics seem to be more practical and closer to immediate application than does the research on the physiological nature of reading.

Descriptive reports have been made in some number. About thirty deal with reading achievement in school systems, with progress of state-wide or province-wide programs, and with



surveys of progress in certain aspects of reading such as problem-solving, voluntary reading, or reading beyond a basal program. For some reason, articles surveying the reading vocabulary and methods of improving that vocabulary are infrequent; only five descriptive articles about vocabulary were classified.

Research in secondary school programs has increased as such programs are instituted in more and more schools. While only two articles in the 1957 summary dealt primarily with developmental reading in secondary schools, six or eight a year were published in the last two years under review. Theoretical articles concerning the nature of the reading task in high school or the tailoring of programs to fit the average reader for this task are lacking in most years. However, there is an encouraging number of studies of the readability of high school materials, some of which make suggestions about the differentiation of materials and assignments.

The reading program now culminates in college and adult classes. Many of the research reports for these levels were featured in the successive meetings of the National Reading Conference for Colleges and Adults which have been held at Fort Worth, Texas. In recent years, however, some ten or fifteen articles have made their way into other meetings and other journals. From 1957 to 1960 there were 59 items which could be classified as college reports, as contrasted with 23 dealing with adult programs. However, research on adult reading goes far beyond the

provision of "courses" and into areas such as library patronage, magazine reading habits, and the like. There is also represented in the Gray summaries a large group of studies on the readership of newspapers and other local publications. In total, at least 118 of the 551 studies deal with college or adult reading and other aspects of the field which must be considered "non-school" or "post-school."

If this summary were to stop at this point, some of the most substantial and interesting reports would remain unmentioned. More than fifty studies, for example, stem from the recognized need to define reading disabilities, retardation, and handicaps, and the pressing need to find methods of dealing with the readers who bring these problems into existence. Increasing attention has been paid over these years to the neurological and psychological aspects of reading disability—variously defined. Chemical as well as psychotherapeutic treatment has been described. An interesting phenomenon has been the gradual movement of this research from psychological and psychoeducational clinics into city school systems.

Group testing, and testing in reading achievement particularly, has long been closer to the average reading teacher, even though measurement too has its mysteries and statistics its arcana. The last two years, as compared with the first two years of these summaries, saw an increased number of articles on tests. The appearance of new tests in word analysis, the comparisons of oral *versus* silent ad-

ministration of tests of comprehension, the study of new tests of scholastic ability have marked the literature.

The continuing study of pupil interests in reading, and the study of preferences for different sorts of reading materials has been recognized by the Gray summaries. At least twenty articles have brought earlier studies up to date, or have recently examined the interests of younger and older pupils. These studies have yet to be extended thoroughly, however, to the college level.

Mention of the "hygiene of reading" as Gray used the term, has long been synonymous with mention of the numerous, careful studies conducted by Miles A. Tinker. These studies have had very considerable effect, not

only on book publishers, but on school architects. To date, they seem to have had less impact on other studies in the physiology of reading, and one sometimes is aware that if some of the standards set by Tinker's research were applied more widely, this whole field would be strengthened.

Dr. Gray put first a set of publications which this summary concludes with. This group is made up of bibliographies and annotated lists of reading references. Each year, several have appeared, and at least 28 have been so classified in this accounting. These 28 are general, systematic reviews of research, and should be supplemented by at least a dozen others doing a thorough, sometimes exhaustive, job in a particular aspect of reading.

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## Interesting BOOKS for the Reading Teacher

BY

**HARRY T. HAHN**

*Oakland County Schools, Michigan*

### **Developmental Reading Text Revised**

RUSSELL, DAVID H. *Children Learn To Read*. Boston: Ginn and Company, 1961. Pp. 612. \$6.00.

The revision of this objective and scholarly text, first published in 1948, was overdue. As the author indicates in his Preface, during the past twelve years we have seen the rise of television; we have been stimulated to take a good look at the word recognition program because of the controversy over phonics; we have been given a fresh interest in ways of individualizing instruction; we have noted an increasing concern for understanding ideas with particular emphasis upon creative and critical thinking; and we have had a "general realization of the value of expert reading in tougher academic and international competition." The volume of the original work has been increased by one third, and the new publication has a more attractive format.

The book is designed to provide a sound educational philosophy, many practical teaching suggestions, and a clear program for the teaching of developmental reading in the elementary school. Some references are made to reading instruction in the junior and senior high school; but, as in the case

of remedial reading, the author suggests other sources for detailed studies at the secondary level.

As in the first edition, Part I discusses the background of the whole reading program. Except for Chapter I, which deals with reading abilities and habits in American life, important revisions have not been made. Part II, "Learning to Read at Various Levels," has been brought up to date and expanded, particularly at the primary level. Part III, "Developmental Phases of the Reading Program," evidently received the most attention. The pattern and style of the earlier work, however, are followed closely.

In its revised form the Russell text is certain to be considered by many college instructors as a sound text for a course in basic reading instruction. Suggestions are specific, detailed, and extensive. Current preferences for supplementary reading are provided liberally. This is an important book by an outstanding educator.

### **An Introductory Survey on Teaching Reading**

HEILMAN, ARTHUR W. *Principles and Practices of Teaching Reading*. Columbus: Charles E. Merrill Books, Inc., 1961. Pp. 465. \$5.95.

The title for this readable book

might have also indicated that the text was primarily concerned with elementary developmental reading programs with a brief examination of "remedial" reading. The author deals with important pervasive principles as guides to decision making. These are factors which control or at least strongly influence learning and, therefore, are responsible for individual differences in achievement, goals, and the specific means of implementing goals.

Heilman's eleven principles for teacher guidance in decision making are pithy, succinct statements. While some behavioral criteria are offered at appropriate points in the text, more attention might have been given to these matters. Insufficient attention to such criteria notwithstanding, the principles could well serve as a guide for study in in-service education of new teachers, as a review for experienced teachers, and as a discussion guide for parent education programs.

The relative merits and limitations of the experience approach, basal readers, and individualized (guided independent) reading are well summarized. It is unfortunate that the author did not extend his analysis to how teachers can fit these three long-range approaches into a balanced classroom program. It is also unfortunate that the author did not put more emphasis upon how teachers can start using the experience approach and individualized programming, and how the directed reading lesson form of organization can be applied to materials and activities other than basal readers. Since other references on application are available, these criticisms do not

demean the values already mentioned.

The two chapters on "remedial" reading dispel forcefully some spurious notions about who can do simple corrective teaching. The author's choice of terms (e.g., remedial) is regrettable, though. While he makes clear elsewhere in the text that he does not expect classroom teachers to handle alone and/or without advice the most difficult corrective cases (e.g., mild emotional disturbance and primary motivational retardation) and true remedial cases (e.g., severe emotional disturbance and brain injury), Heilman seems to lump all such cases under the category "remedial" without specifying the range of such problems and what teachers should expect school psychologists to tell them if such problem cases must remain in regular classrooms for lack of suitable facilities. Conspicuous in its absence was any reference to multisensory input techniques (as Fernald's tracing method) in relation to severe corrective or true remedial cases. Their shortcomings notwithstanding, these two chapters are a valuable minimal introduction to corrective and remedial diagnosis and teaching.

Despite the reviewer's occasional demurrers, *Principles and Practices of Teaching Reading* is on the whole a useful introductory survey for the uninitiated and a valuable review and reference for teachers with some experience. While the text *in toto* is rather ponderous for many undergraduates, it could be used selectively with supplementation by the college instructor.

—RICHARD D. ELDER,  
Eastern Michigan University

### Language Arts in Primary Grades

SHANE, HAROLD G., REDDIN, MARY E., and GILLESPIE, MARGARET C. *Beginning Language Arts Instruction With Children*. Columbus: Charles E. Merrill Books, Inc., 1961. Pp. 286. \$5.95.

"What should be stressed in early elementary language arts?" "How can teachers implement language arts goals?" Keeping ever in mind these basic questions of theory and practice, the authors answer hundreds of practical questions about the purpose and nature of instruction in listening, handwriting, creative writing, spelling, and grammar and usage. Part I elaborates and explores principles crucial for decision making; Part II deals extensively with methodology in relation to the principles earlier set forth.

The reader is introduced to language growth as a complex continuum. Stress upon the learning problems to be expected (normal developmental ones) is a most welcome inclusion. The many delightful sketches in the margins both illustrate and reinforce the ideas.

For prospective and in-service teachers alike this text can be a valuable reference. Teacher trainees should find it very helpful during their practice teaching experiences. Professionals will find many ideas applicable to immature and slow-learning pupils in the intermediate grades and junior high school.

—RICHARD D. ELDER

*Eastern Michigan University*

### More Books for Children

Primary teachers and their pupils may be as delighted as this reviewer was with two new books by Paul

Showers, *In the Night* and *Find Out by Touching*. (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Company, 1961. \$2.35 each in library bindings.) *In the Night* may help to remove some of the terror children associate with darkness and show boys and girls how much fun it is to discover what they can see when the lights go out. *Find Out by Touching* should serve to sharpen the observations of children and help them find words to express sensory perceptions. These are two of the new and exciting titles from the Let's Read and Find Out series edited by Roma Gans.

Speaking of books which are fun and easy to read, one cannot overlook Random House's new series appropriately named For Beginning Beginners. The writers of these surprisingly interesting and delightful books have limited themselves to a sight vocabulary of from fifty to a hundred words. As of June, 1961, the titles included *Green Eggs and Ham* by Dr. Seuss, an appetizing dish; *Ten Apples Up on Top* by Theo. LeSeig (Giesel spelled backwards), balancing ten apples on your head seems to be fun if you know how; *Go, Dog, Go!* and *Are You My Mother?* both by P. D. Eastman; and *Put Me In the Zoo* by Robert Loushire.

Benefic Press continues to release many titles in their new What Is It series. Such titles as *What Is An Atom*, *What Is A Simple Machine*, *What Is the Earth*, and *What Is A Cell* provide much interesting and fundamental science information ranging from first to fourth grade level in readability. This company continues to add new titles to their popular Cowboy Sam and Dan Frontier series. It is evident that the



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market for this kind of book has been a good one, for this year they have added another set to keep pace with the growing demand. The new series, written by Selma and Jack Wassermann, follows the humorous adventures of Sailor Jack in our modern-day navy. The readability range is listed as pre-primer through grade three. The titles include: *Sailor Jack and Eddy*, \$1.60; *Sailor Jack*, \$1.60; *Sailor Jack and Homer Pots*, \$1.60; *Sailor Jack and Bluebell*, \$1.68; *Sailor Jack's New Friend*, \$1.68; *Sailor Jack and the Target Ship*, \$1.80; *Sailor Jack Goes North*, \$1.80. List prices are noted.

### Very Highly Recommended

Teachers in Wisconsin public and private colleges and universities were asked to consider what books they

would like their students to have read before coming to college. The results of this survey, which included responses of 145 different teachers, are reported in a small pamphlet entitled "Reading List for College-Bound High School Students," published by the Wisconsin Council of Teachers of English, 1961, 3700 North 75th Street, Milwaukee 16, Wisconsin. Single copy: 5¢ each. The preferences placed on the very highly recommended list included: *Arthurian Tales*, *Pride and Prejudice*, *The Bible*, *Don Quixote*, *Robinson Crusoe*, *David Copperfield*, *The Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin*, *The Scarlet Letter*, *Iliad and Odyssey*, *Moby Dick*, *Oedipus*, *Gulliver's Travels*, *Walden*, *Huckleberry Finn*, and *Aeneid*. An interesting reason for each choice is given.

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- ☐ **A MAN NAMED LINCOLN** by Gertrude Norman. "Vocabulary has been kept to a basic word list without sacrificing the perennial fascination of Lincoln's life and greatness."—*Education Summary*. 36 pp.
- ☐ **A MAN NAMED WASHINGTON** by Gertrude Norman. "Will be welcomed in all libraries for primary school children."—*School Library Journal*. 36 pp.
- ☐ **A MAN NAMED COLUMBUS** by Gertrude Norman. "Lilting prose . . . an exciting introduction to the discoverer of the New World."—*Shaker Heights Bd. of Ed.* 36 pp.
- ☐ **JOHNNY APPLESEED** by Gertrude Norman. ". . . a good supplement for school lessons in frontier American history."—*Virginia Kyrkus*. 48 pp.
- ☐ **DAVY CROCKETT** by Anne Ford, Illustrated by Leonard Vosburgh. The story of the legendary frontiersman. Strong, accurate illustrations give a feeling of the period. 48 pp. Published in September, 1961.

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## What Other Magazines Say About READING

BY

**MURIEL POTTER LANGMAN**

*Eastern Michigan University and Hawthorn Center, Northville, Michigan*

SHORES, J. HARLAN. "Are Fast Readers the Best Readers?—A Second Report." *Elementary English*, April 1961.

In 1950 Dr. Shores reported a study of this question, the conclusion of which was that at sixth-grade level there was no relationship between reading speed and reading comprehension when the task was difficult. (It is at third-grade level that good readers are rapid readers—MPL.)

In the study now reported both sixth graders and able adult readers were subjects. For the sixth graders, four reading rate measures were used for different aspects of reading science materials; five comprehension measures provided comprehension scores; mental age was obtained by use of the California Test of Mental Maturity, Non-Language; and the Sequential Tests of Educational Progress provided a measure of achievement in science. Three of the author's own tests of reading in science, unpublished, were also used. These are described in detail in his article.

The college students, graduate and undergraduate, who made up the able reader group were provided with similar but abbreviated reading tests, all given at a single sitting.

For the sixth graders, here are a few

interesting results: As rate is measured by the Iowa Silent Reading Test, fast readers are the best readers, but on Reading for Problem Solving in Science, fast readers are not the best readers. Most rapid readers for main ideas do not do well on reading for problem solving in science. The investigator describes and interprets his findings in a way that is too detailed for inclusion here, but his report is well worth reading for the light given us on the nature and teaching of reading skills. "Those who read general reading test materials rapidly on a first reading also read well, but those who re-read and answer questions rapidly are not necessarily those who read well."

When adults and children were compared, the more difficult the material the less difference was found between child and adult reading rates. The adult good readers adjusted their rate to the requirements of the task. They were more flexible in adjusting reading rate to difficulty than the children. In both groups, reading the same material for a set purpose influenced the speed at which reading was done.

ROWAN, HELEN (Ed.). "'Tis Time He Should Begin to Read." *Carnegie Corporation of New York Quarterly*, April 1961.

This pamphlet describes in popular



terms a number of studies of reading supported by grants from the Carnegie Corporation, under the headings, in addition to the title article, "What Underlies Reading Disability?" (carried on by Jack A. Holmes); "Tomorrow's Teachers of Reading" (Dr. Mary Austin's study); "Reading at an Adult Level"; and "Research on Reading Research."

The title article describes some work done by O. K. Moore of Yale in individual instruction of thirty-five children ages two to five. These children learned to read, write, and use an electric typewriter (in the reverse order). The article gives no information about the subjects except their ages and the statement that only two were "gifted," the others having I.Q.'s within the normal range. These children did not have to be taught in a "didactic" way—they played with the typewriter, and the role of the individual who "taught" was simply to provide a "responsive environment." The method was to allow each child to have "fun" playing with the electric typewriter, while an adult named the letters as the child struck them at random. Eventually, we are told, the child tried to name the letter he was striking before the teacher could do so. The child was also encouraged to draw on the blackboard, and was reported to spontaneously print the letters. As soon as he knew these a "projector" was fastened to the typewriter, and this resulted in the child's reading and typing out simple sentences. A more detailed and comprehensible description of the method would have carried more weight—at least, the description was quite incomprehensible

to me, particularly the transition from learning letters to reading.

This method is to be tried out with preschool children in a coeducational day school (private?), with an automated device substituted for the teacher.

Certainly one would like to know a good deal more about the details of this new approach.

BONEY, C. DE WITT. "A New Program for the Late Reader." *Elementary English*, May 1961.

This article first realistically discusses the problems that arise in "postponing" reading for late maturing children in regular classrooms in middle-class neighborhoods. When handwork and other nonreading activities have been used as substitutes for actual reading under such circumstances, parents and community at large regard these activities as play or busywork, and as having little or no educational value. The children themselves also recognize that this treatment marks them as different from the others. Thus this way of dealing with late maturation in reading has been poorly accepted and, as a result of poor acceptance, has been unsuccessful in the main.

In many cases such "readiness" activities are not developing readiness because the children are already quite capable of performing such tasks efficiently. Dr. Boney feels that the test of a child's ability to learn is his response to teaching, and he advocates that at suitable intervals attempts be made to assess readiness by exposing the children to teaching. Obviously he writes out of wide experience. He comments that in his observation—and I

agree—that many of these late starters do not “catch up.” Since delay at the beginning of reading so frequently results in long-term or permanent reading retardation, he suggests the importance of involving parents in planning for these late starters. If the parents accept the program, the children can then do so also, and the program will have an opportunity to achieve the goals for which it was planned.

Dr. Boney also contrasts the problem of the late-starting reader in the middle-class family, where lack of achievement is not merely a disappointment but a threat to long-range family plans and goals, with that of the late starter in the low cultural area, where many of the children mature late academically, but where family pressure to achieve is low or nonexistent. Indifference to the school's efforts may be as defeating as too much pressure.

SILVER, ARCHIE A. “Diagnostic Considerations in Children with Reading Disability.” *Bulletin of the Orton Society*, May 1961.

Dr. Silver discusses the syndrome of specific reading disability, identified by problems of body image and orientation in space, and of perception problems in the various sensory modes. He describes a study initiated in 1949 by himself and Dr. Rosa Hagin with Dr. Loretta Bender. The neurological evaluation of the children is described with particular reference to left-right disorientation and cerebral dominance problems; diagnostic procedures are also given in detail for evaluating auditory and tactile perception.

LANGMAN, MURIEL P. “The Reading Process: A Descriptive, Interdisci-

plinary Approach.” *Genetic Psychology Monographs*, 62 (August 1960), 3-40.

Most definitions of the reading process are either gross over-simplifications or the view of one field of specialization. Such definitions usually include the idea that reading is “an active mental process” and involves “reconstructing the facts which the symbols represent.” So far, so good—but what do such descriptions really imply? Dr. Langman in her highly creative and stimulating monograph offers a much needed interdisciplinary approach to this problem.

Drawing upon descriptive linguistics, perception theory, learning theory, and knowledge of human development from a cultural orientation, Professor Langman examines and hypothesizes about the importance of such factors as visual and auditory perception, listening behavior, vocabulary acquisition, association of meaning with visual symbols, word analysis, and set and attention. Throughout the discussion she considers such variables as the development of verbal functioning, memory, and crucial processes, as discrimination, conceptualization, insight, generalization and transfer. Especially interesting is the attention given to the problem of transfer across sense modalities and between response systems.

The practical and theoretical implications of Dr. Langman's thinking are relevant to long-needed curriculum revision as well as to treatments for individuals. This brief, pithy monograph is recommended reading for curriculum coordinators, psychologists, and reading specialists.

—RICHARD D. ELDER,  
*Eastern Michigan University*

## THE CLIP SHEET

Mary Elisabeth Coleman  
University of Pennsylvania

### Consumers and Users

The American Book Publishers Council is an Association of one hundred sixty-six publishers. The group is realistic about the importance of the schools in developing lifetime readers, and so arranged a conference with educators to discuss aspects of the use of books in education.

One result of the conference is a publication in which a number of contributors present viewpoints on the use of books and other media for giving information. For example, Morton Botel describes how Pennsylvania moved rapidly toward the development of a reading program for students in junior high schools. In another chapter Virginia Mathews answers questions that are frequently asked about school libraries.

The publication is full of interesting data. Did you realize that to meet "the very modest standards of the American Association of School Librarians" the amount spent annually for the purchase of books by school libraries would have to be increased 450 per cent?

Nearly two-thirds of the elementary schools in the United States do not have central libraries and 10 per cent of the secondary schools lack libraries.

You might purchase a copy of the book to send to the president of your Board of Education.

James Cass (Editor), *Books in the Schools*. American Book Publishers Council, Inc., 58 West 40th Street, New York 18, N. Y. \$1.00.

### Reading in Social Studies

The National Council for the Social Studies has published *Children's Books to Enrich the Social Studies*, an annotated report of 618 children's books suitable for use from kindergarten through grade six. The entries are organized in the following categories: Our World, Times Past, People Today, The World's Work, and Living Together. The booklet contains both an author index and a title index.

Teachers in junior high school and in high school who are looking for materials for children of low reading ability will find the annotations helpful in selecting material of high interest but easy reading level.

Helen Huus, *Children's Books to Enrich the Social Studies*. National Council for the Social Studies, 1201 Sixteenth Street, N.W., Washington, D. C. \$2.50.

### Book Awards

Do you have trouble remembering what the criteria are for the selection of the many book awards? I do, and so welcome a booklet prepared by the Westchester Library System, New York, which furnishes the history and



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purpose of more than twenty-five of the current awards. It also lists the winners for 1960 and those 1961 awards which were announced prior to March 15, 1961.

"Children's Books: Awards and Prizes." Order from Children's Book Council, 175 Fifth Avenue, New York 10, N. Y. \$0.50 per copy.

### Reading in Braille

The *World Book Encyclopedia* is now available in Braille. It is bulky, as all Braille publications are. The twenty volumes of the regular edition become 145 volumes in the Braille edition.

Those of us who work with sighted children become so accustomed to referring children to the encyclopedia that we tend to take it for granted, and fail to appreciate what a boon it is to independent study.

### New Book Editor

In the middle of the past summer Alice Dalglish assumed responsibilities as editor of the section, "Books for Young People," in the *Saturday Review*. In addition to being a distinguished author of children's literature, Miss Dalglish has taught children and adult classes at Columbia University and was the first president of the Children's Book Council.

### Pictured References

Time, Inc., is moving into book publishing, with books that use the picture article procedure developed in *Life*. Life World Library will offer books dealing with foreign countries. Life Nature Library, in the books mentioned to date, seems to be focused on aspects of physical geography.

The extensive display of pictures can be used by the teacher to stimulate discussion leading to questions for which satisfactory answers cannot be found by reference to the pictures alone. Clearly, then, the text must be studied. Unless the teacher plays his proper role, however, many pupils may be satisfied with sketchy and sometimes faulty interpretation of pictures, without reference to the text.

### The Right Way to Read

We get no good

By being ungenerous, even to a book,  
And calculating profits — so much  
help

By so much reading. It is rather when  
We gloriously forget ourselves and  
plunge

Soul-forward, headlong, into a book's  
profound,

Impassioned for its beauty and salt  
of truth—

'Tis then we get the right good from  
a book.

—Elizabeth Barrett Browning

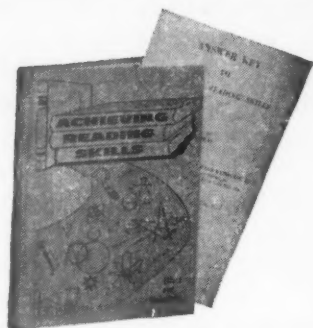


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## PRESIDENT'S REPORT

BY

**WILLIAM D. SHELDON**

President, International Reading Association

**T**HE FIRST board meeting of the year was held on October 13-15, 1961, in Chicago. Nine board members, three officers and the executive secretary-treasurer attended the meeting. In addition, the chairman and the co-chairman of the Local Arrangements Committee which is planning the San Francisco conference, Dr. Edward Griffin and Dr. Constance McCullough, attended to present a progress report.

The treasurer's report revealed a number of interesting facts. For the year 1961-1962, 10,752 members have paid their fees, and Dr. McCallister estimates that our total membership will be approximately 14,000 by June 1962. In addition, 4,500 subscriptions to *THE READING TEACHER* have been sold. For the September 1961 issue of this journal 23,000 copies have been printed and will undoubtedly be sold.

You will be impressed, as I was, by the fact that our operating budget for 1961-62 will be \$102,548.02. The Citation Committee, under the leadership of Dr. George Spache, is preparing to nominate an outstanding leader in the field of reading. The Evaluation Committee is making a careful study of our publications to insure that we maintain a balanced program. Dr. Clymer presented an

interesting project in the form of bulletins which could be made from material in past issues of *THE READING TEACHER*. Dr. LaVerne Strong, Organization chairman, tells us that we now have 227 councils in IRA. A number of new councils are being formed at the present time, and it is probable that there will be 250 councils affiliated with the IRA in the next year or two.

One of the highlights of the board meeting was the progress report on the San Francisco conference. This year for the first time three days will be devoted to general meetings. Your board was enthusiastic when they learned that Dr. Donald D. Durrell had accepted the invitation to give the opening speech of the general meetings on Friday morning. Thursday evening will be devoted to the meeting of the assembly. It is our hope that every council will be able to send a delegate to the assembly. Many consider the action of the assembly a crucial indication of the interest of the membership in the business and professional activities of the organization.

Your president invites you to submit to him any question or problem which you want considered by the Board of Education.

# ANNOUNCING

## An Important NEW Book **EFFECTIVE TEACHING OF READING**

by ALBERT J. HARRIS, Queens College, Flushing  
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### CONTENTS

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- VI. Studying Children's Learning Needs in Reading
- VII. Providing for Individual and Group Needs
- VIII. Learning to Recognize Words
- IX. Developing Independence in Word Recognition
- X. Fostering Vocabulary Development
- XI. Building Reading Comprehension
- XII. Developing Efficiency in Functional Reading
- XIII. Improving Reading Interests
- XIV. Meeting the Reading Needs of Every Child
- Appendix A: Resources for the Teacher of Reading
- Appendix B: A Concise Summary of Phonics
- Appendix C: Names and Addresses of Publishers
- Index.

### An Important Revision

#### **HOW TO INCREASE READING ABILITY**

by ALBERT J. HARRIS. Fourth Edition, 1961. 624 pp. \$6.00

#### **READING INSTRUCTION IN THE SECONDARY SCHOOL**

by HENRY A. BAMMAN, Sacramento State College, URSULA HOGAN, Educational Consultant, Sacramento County, California, and CHARLES E. GREENE, Former Superintendent of Schools, Denver, Colorado. 1961. 266 pp. \$4.25

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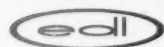
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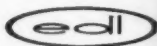
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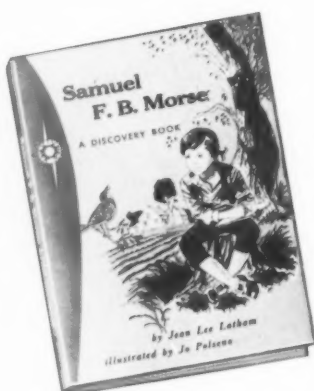
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